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Are Empires and their Empires alike subject to decay? Are they also the Inheritors of Shadows, and [illegible]

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THE

FROGS AND THEIR KING;

OR, THE

PEOPLE AND THEIR RULERS:

A

MORAL ANALYSIS OF MEN AND MANNERS,

ADAPTED TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY

IGNOTUS COAXUS.

"Croak! Croak! Croak!"—ARISTOPH.

LONDON:

W. EDWARDS, 12, AVE MARIA LANE,

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PREFACE.

THE history of Empires is a tale, to which their dust is the moral, "Behold the imperial mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls."

> There is the moral of all human tales,
> 'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
> First freedom, and then glory—when that fails,
> Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at last.

Such, it is but too true, has in general been the headlong career of emperors and their empires.

> And history, with all her volumes vast,
> Hath but *one* page.

"'Tis better written" in the dust of the imperial mount!

In contemplating the ruins of ancient empires, the very question of, whether a similar fate awaits modern states, enhances the interest of every event which appears to affect the stability of our own glorious nation.

It is said that "there is nothing new under

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the sun"—at any rate, the jealousies existing between rulers and their subjects, in modern states, are not without precedent in former times. And perhaps the Fable of the Frogs and their King, although originally addressed to an ancient people, may not be considered altogether inapplicable to some modern communities. Indeed, regarding the present political aspect of European nations, where the thirst for political and moral changes on the one hand, and the hazard of rash and speculative innovations on the other, are apparent to every reflecting mind; where the entire fabric of our own domestic polity is placed in jeopardy, by the very means which are even laudably sought for the relief of our state difficulties and national burthens, by a large portion of the people; the Fable of the Frogs may still serve to illustrate, as well the inconsiderate folly of those who clamorously sue for theoretic changes and utopian perfection in legislation and forms of government, as the fatuity of those rulers, who, in spite of the wants of increased population, and the diffusion of general intelligence and political opinions, stupidly oppose or neglect the wishes and real wants of the people.

The democratic spirit of change and rash speculation, whether it be called into action by the supineness of rulers, or the restlessness of the

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newly awaking popular intelligence, equally demands our serious attention; lest the reckless and unskilful hand of an impassioned, rather than a reflecting people, should be unwarily permitted to practise its crude experiments upon the vital principles of our national constitution;—lest the spirit of change, without salutary moral and civil checks, should hurry this once justly esteemed prosperous, and reflecting nation, into the vortex of revolution;—lest by forced and hasty treatment, it should waste away the *stamina* of that liberty, "the Hesperian tree of which," in the language of Fox, "should not, in its growth and culture, be committed to improper hands, lest by *over-production* its finest qualities and choicest fruits should become depreciated, or even worthless."

All that is required at the hands of the courteous reader, is a candid consideration of the important subject. The object is not fame, nor to serve the narrow interests of any faction or party; but to render the hours of leisure, in some small degree subservient to the public weal. Although the importance of the topics embraced, might fairly demand a more elaborate discussion, yet it has been considered upon the whole, that the method selected will be more generally acceptable; and in the execution of a task, in itself truly formidable,

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and whilst offering an apology on public grounds, the known advantages attendant on the assumption of a *mystic character*, for the authorship, are preferred, the entire having been submitted to the correcting revision of an impartial friend. The remarks are not merely addressed to the ignorant and totally unreflecting; but to the fair scrutiny of all those who may be enabled to appreciate, what it is ventured to declare are the deductions of *right reason*, illustrated by plain matter of fact argument; and who by enlarging in their own minds upon the views and opinions set forth, notwithstanding any imperfections of style, may be induced to pause, and thereby avoid the evil consequences of their becoming movers and participators in crude and ill-digested schemes of supposed reform and improvement; but the very tendency of which, in their operation, may become totally subversive of the glory of England, the elasticity of her free constitution, the prosperity and happiness of her sons at home, and their honour and renown amongst the nations of the world!

"Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum."

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE impartial reader is respectfully requested to notice the hasty misreadings, and typographical inaccuracies, which are corrected under the following head of

ERRATA.

Page 21, line 7, *for* Flascola, *read* Tlascola.
22 — 8, 9, *omit* in, *and read*—or, the republic of Athens, the furious democracy of *revolutionary* France.
24 — 21, *omit* principle, *and read* by which, *&c.*
40 — 6, *read* due sequence.
44 — 2, *for* but by, *read* not only.
44 — 3, *for* and also, *read* but also.
47 — 6, *for* In, *read* The support, *&c.*
53 — 8, *for* eminent, *read* imminent.
68 — 6, *for* Burlamgui, *read* Burlamaqui.
73 — 7, *for* were infringed, *read* and were, *&c.*
129 — 8, *for* preserved, *read* reserved.
140 — 4, *for* Lenon, *read* Zenon.
170 — 24, *after* ruins, *read* which still testify, *&c.*

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THE

PEOPLE AND THEIR RULERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE FROGS AND THEIR KING.

In a primeval age, it is said, that the Frogs, obedient to Nature's laws, lived a free and happy life among their fens and lakes. But becoming discontented with the monotony of their existence, they ceased from the good old ways of their ancestors, and involved at length in anarchy and discord, petitioned Jupiter for a king, and cried, "Oh! Jupiter, pity our condition,—Too many minds, too many masters! Give us a king to reign over us, who may make our happiness his study, and execute judgment and truth." But Jove, indignant at the rebellion of his creatures, yet pitying their infatuation, threw down a log of wood amongst the croaking legions, and with a voice of thunder said, "there is a king for you." Then were they all panic stricken, and all re-

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coiled in consternation from so monstrous a visitor; but by degrees they ventured to peep up from their lakes, and gaze with astonishment and self-complacency upon the king which they had thus obtained.

Happy in the idea that they now possessed all that they had desired, they also thought that it was all that was requisite to their happiness. But indeed it was only for a time that things went on so smoothly; for the root of their misery was still there: still discontented with their lot, and calling upon king log for redress, they were astonished and vexed to find that he favoured them not, nor procured them that relief for which they altogether relied upon him. Then assailing him on every side with murmuring and croaking, they at last, one by one, leapt upon him, saying, "Oh! thou immoveable log, we now see what thou art; and since thou canst not earn our respect, thou must endure our reproach and contempt." Nor satisfied with venting reproaches, nor with so inert a king, they again presented their petitions to Jupiter for another.

But woe to the nation of Frogs! when "Jupiter disgusted at their importunate folly sent them a stork for a king, who, without ceremony eat them up whenever his craving appetite required a supply!"

The miserable short-sighted croakers now saw, when it was too late, that no change of external circumstances could possibly remove the evils re-

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sulting from *private* vices and follies; but that on the contrary, such a change was, in their case, only from bad to worse.

The Athenians, under their Commonwealth, led free and prosperous lives, until they allowed their refinement to degenerate into luxury, and their liberty into licentiousness; and then divided into factions, and misled by designing and reckless characters, they became an easy prey to whoever might dare to seize the falling reins of Government. At this crisis, Pisistratus the Tyrant, after a series of intrigues and artifices, stepped forward, and at once grasped both their citadel and liberties. But although Pisistratus was admired even by the Athenians for his clemency and justice, yet on account of a name, he was three times banished by the fickle republicans; and by their wavering factions as often recalled. They would rather crouch and succumb to the most vile and tyrannical of their fellow-citizens than endure the sway of the wisest and mildest sovereign.

It was while they were thus writhing under the tyranny of the mere name of Tyrant; whilst they were declaiming against the sovereignty of the once popular Pisistratus, that Æsop took occasion to recite to them the significant fable of "the Frogs and their King."

And indeed it was not inapplicable. For when we consider, on the one hand, the happy condition of the Frogs, while they continued faithful to the laws of their nature, and the futility of every

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device when they departed from them; and on the other hand, the prosperity of the Athenian people during those times of their commonwealth in which their adherence to wisdom and virtue prevailed over every disposition of a vicious character; and again, how abandoned they became to anarchy and every depravity when they degenerated from their previous happy state; when we consider all this, the lesson of the Frogs is not inappropriate.

Much is frequently remarked concerning the apparent perfect adaptation of the instincts of irrational animals, in contradistinction to the erroneous and inapt conduct of rational beings. And when we regard the former, and scrutinize their various performances, as, for instance, the mathematical precision of the bee in the construction of the cells of its comb, whilst man with all his scholastic erudition, could scarcely have devised so complete a model; or if we observe the regularity of their economy, and the corresponding order and business of their lives, and the subservience of their classes only to the general good of their little commonwealth; we must confess the superiority of nature's workmanship, we must acknowledge that the wisdom which regulates their happy polity is superior to the crude and self-degrading expedients of presumptuous man. Yet this does not arise from the superior intelligence of the animal, but proceeds from the wisdom of the Divine Author of nature, thus systematized in them, and instinctively

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carried into stupendous operation. And if this instinct be by any circumstance thwarted, the evil consequences are presently manifested. Reason and revelation are to man, what instinct is to animals. A deviation from either is a departure from rectitude and happiness.

It is said in the fable, that the Frogs became tired of the monotony of their happy life, and therefore wished for a change. Now it is very improbable that they should desire a change for the worse, inasmuch as such a wish has no analogy in the animal kingdom. Every prayer is for good and happiness; and if any creature in a state of happiness seeks a change, it is only for another variety of the same happy state of being. Yet the circumstance of the Frogs having become discontented, does not prove that their felicity was not all of which their nature was susceptible. Probably it was of that negative description, which consists in ignorance of any thing more desirable; and as soon as they obtained a glimpse of a higher state of being, however inappropriate to them, yet they immediately felt an irresistible longing to attain it. We may also conceive that this glimpse of better things, might first of all dawn upon the wakeful eyeballs of some one frog of superior understanding to the rest of that nation. And we may also conceive that this frog, wiser than all the rest, was also endowed with such enlarged views of *citizenship* and *patriotism*, that he might have reasoned thus:—"I have obtained a *new light* that enables me

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to see all things as they are, and as they should be —a light is not made to be placed under a shade, but to communicate its effulgence to all around; and it is therefore my duty to disseminate the influence of which I am now possessed." He would then go and call together an assembly of the Frogs; and he himself mounting upon the margin of his lake, and turning towards the multitude beneath, might address them, and say, "Friends and fellow-creatures! we have long lived together here in undisturbed tranquillity and apparent felicity. I call it apparent felicity, because I have discovered that there are higher grades of existence even in the world that we inhabit, than any of us seem before to have dreamt of. You may indeed, many of you, have seen instances of the kind to which I refer; but it has fallen to my lot only, to contemplate them with a philosophic eye, and to draw deductions from them, in which I trust you will at once concur as soon as you hear them proposed. They are so simple and natural that I cannot see how any one can dissent from them. All the beings on earth are the creatures of the great Jove. But we perceive how varied are all the sorts of them. I refer not only to the noble lion pacing through his forests, and keeping all other creatures in awe of his magnanimous power; but chiefly to beings of our own dimensions, and even less. There are the busy little emmets who erect themselves palaces, and fulfil their appointed offices with all the wonderful propriety of beings of

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a higher order; and there are the bees and the beavers, which display no less ingenuity than the former. Now, I really do not see why we are to be cooped up in our lakes, leading so monotonous a life as we have been used to; nor why we should not have a king invested with princely attributes, to counsel us and lead us forth. I really do not see why, with our broad backs, we should not carry pebbles and mud to erect palaces; nor why, with our active limbs, we should not be able to travel as far as any of those tribes which I have named: and although we cannot fly across rivers and seas, we can assuredly swim. Therefore, as I think it would be desirable towards attaining these ends and purposes to have a king to counsel and lead us forth becomingly, it behoves us to bethink ourselves of the best way of obtaining one. I would readily have offered *my own* services to you in that capacity; but from some experiments which I have made, I very much doubt whether any of our own nation would be capable of undertaking so novel an office; yet if any one present can propose a measure better than that of a direct appeal to Jupiter the omnipotent, I shall be ever ready to concur in whatever may promise to promote our common happiness."

Such might, in effect, have been the language of that first great frog, set like a light upon a hill; nor is it less likely that several other plans were proposed, besides the first. As soon as discontent,

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from whatever cause, takes possession of the human mind, there is an end to happiness. Let prospects be never more brilliant, and comforts and advantages never so great, yet if the possessor of them becomes dissatisfied with his present condition, although he has every reason for being contented and happy, he immediately renders himself miserable, disturbs the repose of others, and falls upon devising utopean schemes for attaining what he is actually leaving behind. Such was the condition of the unfortunate frogs of yore.

"Oh! indomitable multitude!" proceeded a young political frog, "shall we not all concur in the self-approving proposition which has just been made? Are we not leading at present a truly monotonous existence? And is it not fitting that we should aspire to something that will raise us in the scale of rational being? The emmet is indeed a god, compared with a frog! But why should this be? Do we not possess faculties capable of enjoying a more enlarged sphere of activity? But why should we seek for a king? Do we not know our own wants and pleasures better than any other creature can tell us? Let us be our own electors and rulers. Let him who first informed us upon this matter, together with such others as we may choose from amongst ourselves, be appointed to reign over us, and lead us in this new way. Oh! ye wide-mouthed multitude, what say ye to this? Shall we not rule ourselves?" And then ten thou-

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sand voices croak aloud, "It is just that we should rule ourselves; we are surely the best judges of our wants and happiness."

We may again suppose that this system was adopted for one day—that with much tumult the representatives were chosen—that when elected, they assembled on the surface of a marsh for the dispatch of business—that one half of the day was spent in the one part of the hoarse-voiced senators bringing over the remainder to be of the same opinion as the former, upon the course they proposed to adopt; and that the other half was wasted in *factious* attempts on the part of certain artfully designing frogs, to turn the current of affairs to their own individual advantage. Then behold the distracted nation convened to deliberate upon further measures! Then we might hear one accusing the other of traitorous designs; some detecting political errors; and others prescribing *remedies* for all disorders! The sapient old frog, and *primum mobile* of the multitude, would doubtlessly also have his turn, and reproach the others with not at first hearkening to his sage counsel; deprecating a *self-government*, a *democracy*, or a *republic*, a state of things in which passion and faction have so wide a field of action, and such irresponsible licence, and reason so little control. "And now," says he, "ye perceive the consequence of your pertinacity; the son has taken part against his sire, and brother against brother! Our clear lakes are defiled with the *mud* which your tumults and

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unruly ambition have disturbed; and where we once passed happy and contented lives, nothing do I now see but progressively accumulating evils, discord, and destruction!"

Ultimately it is resolved to try the expedient of a *monarchy*. But before they venture to appeal to Jupiter, it is thought more convenient to look about for a king amongst some of those tribes which already appeared to possess those enviable qualities to which this high-shouldered people aspired. For this purpose it is resolved to court the alliance successively of the ant, the bee, and the beaver, which had been already adduced as creatures worthy of imitation. They then dispatch envoys to each court in succession; but alas, for their reception! The envoys upon arriving at the portals of the two former, were immediately surrounded and stung to death, before they had time to deliver their message; and those sent to the third, were unluckily trodden down in the very threshold, and contemptuously buried in the clay. Upon ascertaining these melancholy tidings, the disconcerted frogs determined that an alliance with such *sanguinary* people was by no means desirable; and that, therefore, if they were to have a king, it must be from some of the more pacific and considerate nations, which would neither sting nor rudely trample upon them.

It was most likely when the Frogs had lost all hopes of improving their domestic condition, by a variety of such foolish expedients, that they deter-

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mined to petition Jupiter for a king; and he, indignant at their folly, threw down to them the log of wood. If earth cannot gratify our wishes, it is certain that Heaven can! The Frogs, however, soon discovered to their cost, that king log was not the thing they wanted. They were once happy; but became discontented, and desired to be happier. They asked for a king, and got one; but he would not do. They asked for another, and a stork was sent amongst them, which devoured them for his own gratification.

The discerning Frog which had first awakened the ambition of his nation, was probably one of those that were first eaten by the stork; and in the fatal moment, it may be conjectured that he would be stung with remorse, as well for his folly as his fate. Experience makes even fools wise; and the Frogs learnt more in this way than the Athenians. In a democracy, the factions are over suspicious and jealous of each other; in a republic, they are suspicious, distrustful, and jealous of their representatives; and in a monarchy, they are suspicious and jealous of their king. A discontented people, unsubdued by religion, are always suspicious and jealous of each other; and an unrighteous people have ever most reason to be so, for the anger of God is upon them.

After the time of the stork, the generation of Frogs became somewhat wiser, and saw the impropriety of wishing for a state of things inappropriate to their nature. They remembered the traditions

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of their fathers respecting their former happy condition, when they were the *liege* subjects of Nature and obeyed her laws; and accordingly, with unanimous consent, reverted to that allegiance, upon which their former happiness rested, and their present existence, as a great and prosperous nation, alone depended. "Even to this day," says Casti, "every beast is governed only by instinct and habit."

> Avean in somma il jus che chiamar lice
> Là legislazion della Natura
> Provida, universal legislatrice,
> E dell' opere altrui norma sicura.

The nation of Frogs, reverting to their original habits of instinctive virtue and contentment, still enjoy a free and happy existence: but the Athenians! where are they? We only trace them in the ruins of what they were!

It is recorded of the Frogs, that during the season of their anarchy and discontent, they not only quarrelled and fought amongst themselves, but also with some of the neighbouring tribes; especially with the nation of *mice* upon the borders of one of their lakes. It appears that the two nations inhabited the same fen, but could not agree upon the boundaries of their respective territories, and therefore rushed headlong into the most rancorous hostilities with each other; each claiming the sovereignty of the entire fen. When their armies were drawn up in battle array for the purpose of settling these

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conflicting pretensions by an appeal to *arms*, their two leaders, whilst engaged in single combat, were simultaneously carried off by a *kite*, which pounced upon them in the very midst of the fray; and the two armies, wondering at the event, were almost in the same instant annihilated by some hungry ravens, who chanced to espy their hostile movements. Had the nation of Frogs persevered in so deadly a career, there can be little doubt but that they would have been at this day as extinct as a nation as the warlike Athenians have themselves become. The avarice and ambition of the high-minded Greeks, not merely rioted amongst themselves, but extended their desolating ravages into remote regions, and ultimately brought back upon themselves that recoil of foreign influence and retribution, which only terminated in their national destruction.

The mass of the people of all nations whereof we read, have been discontented and miserable—their kings and rulers have more frequently regarded the aggrandizement of their own power and personal interests, than the welfare of their subjects; empire after empire has sunk into degeneracy and oblivion: and ranging through the moral universe in search of the causes of human misery, we may ultimately trace them back to the breasts of all mankind, operating there as a spirit, or natural disposition, influencing them to rest their affections upon schemes, names, dignities, and

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phantasms as impalpable as air; and each man seeking his private aim despite of his neighbour's good, each becomes his own tormentor, and each the evil genius of his friend, compatriot, and fellow-creature. The moral of the latter fable, is, indeed, as applicable to the foreign policy of the Athenians, as that of the former was to their domestic polity.

The leading feature of men, in all ages of the world, has ever been self-interest; and when this is not kept within due bounds, by a just sense of religion, morality, and honour, their bad passions are let loose, and money, power, or dominion, are the chief objects they keep in view. When men thus depraved, have long soared above restraint, and their numbers and power become predominant in a nation, the accumulation of their wickedness hurries them blindly on to break out into offensive wars with other nations, on the most frivolous pretences; and rapine, plunder, und innumerable murders, succeed, by which humanity is outraged; and the fair face of nature deluged with blood. "Peace is the natural happy state of man, and war is his disgrace." The mighty amongst the frogs and mice attended not to this; they strutted and exulted for a time: but their pride, tyranny, and injustice, had an end.

It often happens (as in the case of the combatants in the fable), that when national depravity has attained its height, the kites and ravens of other

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regions are invited forth, and made the instruments of a just retribution.

And where all was magnificence and glory, acquired at the expense of every virtue, nothing do we behold but insignificance, misery, and melancholy desolation!

Nemo animum summi inemorem genitoris in altum, exitat, ad cœlum mittit suspiria nemo!

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CHAPTER II.

RUINS OF ANCIENT EMPIRES.

SOME of the most interesting objects of modern times, are the remains of the ancient. Into whatever country the traveller passes, his attention is almost sure to be attracted towards its antiquities. If he examines the Roman aqueducts of Spain, the amphitheatres and statues of Rome, or the Roman wall in Britain, he discovers in them the lofty remains of ancient master-work, the sagacious ingenuity of men of former ages, and the ruins of a mighty empire. If he traverses the domains of modern Turkey and Greece, he visits cities and places, with the names of which he was familiar only in ancient history, when Sparta was the birth-place of heroes, and Athens the resort of the philosophers and orators of old; when the Parthenon, now in decay, was the temple of the land; when Helicon was celebrated for the fountains of the Muses, and Olympus was crowned with the celestial abodes. If he visits the Pashawlic of Egypt, the everlasting Pyramids carry back his mind to times, as it were, before

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history began—the tottering columns and chiseled fragments that he here and there sees, as he ascends the venerable Nile, record the former glory of temples and cities now nearly, or entirely, forgotten; and *Thebes*, that city of the sun, with her hundred gates, now humbles herself in the dust, like other places of once equal renown. If he turns to Persia and Palestine, formerly the seats of mighty empires, there is *Jerusalem* like a widow in her affliction; and Tyre, where the fishermen spread their nets upon the bare fragments of her former grandeur. The grassgrown ruins of Persepolis, like the Birs Nimrood of Babylon, in midst of melancholy desolation, stand like the solemn witnesses of antiquity, at once testifying how glorious they have been, and how ancient and how desolate they are now. And what has become of all those mighty nations, which seemed in turn to keep the world in awe! Are emperors and their empires alike subject to decay? Are they alike the inheritors of that doom which brings mortals to an end!

In the rolls of history we read how the voluptuousness and splendour of a *Sardanapalus* involved the doom of his dominions, in that of his own, at the hands of his oppressed subjects; and how the vials of an indignant Deity were successively emptied upon an ungodly people. He that has marked the policy of ancient states will not marvel at the ruins which he thus contemplates; nor at the sweeping destruction which has chased those people

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from the chart of empires. The proud Persian, who marched his armies into Babylonia and Egypt, in the presumption of extending his dominions, was but a fit subject at a future day for the just chastisement of some realm equally ambitious. Neither, was the nation, which like Greece of old would plunge headlong into war on account of the provocation excited by the impudent sarcasm of an Artaphernes, very likely long to remain, nor to suffer others to remain, ungoaded with the spear of chivalrous enterprise. The original subject of warfare was generally soon lost sight of; and a succession of unrelenting cruelty and hostilities followed, where ambition was the ruling principle of action, and military glory was the real object for which they battled; where Persia herself becomes the ally of Grecian states; and Athens and Thebes are now allied against Sparta, and now Athens and Sparta against Thebes, to preserve the *balance of power*, and gratify the fatal jealousy of sister states; until at length the whole of those states, and the Persian empire itself, were swallowed up in the boundless ambition of the Macedonian conqueror. And although the causes of their different wars may in some instances appear tolerably feasible, yet they are only so upon the supposition that their differences and animosities could not have been otherwise appeased than by wager of battle; or, that the only way of their acquiring national wealth, was by levying their demands upon the territories and treasuries of neighbouring princes. Such also was

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the open policy of the Romans, who, indeed, seem to have had little else to do than to go and to conquer; or rather, as if it were, by the common consent of nations, they had but to march and receive the submission of their new provinces—well might some of the helpless Barbarians have said to them, as the natives of St. Christopher's since said to their British and French invaders, "Land must certainly be very scarce in your country, when you come so far to seek it among such barbarians as we!" The same appellation "*Hostis*," served them both for stranger and enemy. The gods held the balance and weighed one nation against another—when one went up another went down; and different, it is to be hoped, to the present law of nature, and of nations too, the reason why one went down, was, that another went up.

It is melancholy to reflect through what generations of bootless pain, and through what seas of blood, man has, in all ages, careered to attain that glory from which, when attained, he is almost in the same moment precipitately repulsed; like the blazing comet that hurrying along towards the sun, no sooner approaches, than it is as rapidly repelled. Alas, for ambition! she whets her knife upon the knife of her enemy, and her present victories do but make ready the causes of her future downfall.

> Altera jam teritur bellis civilibus tas,
> Suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit.

Amid the divided councils of a civil war, the

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luxury of triumphal peace, and the recoil of rising empires, the decline of the Roman is not so extraordinary as its rise. And now, where the Assyrian once gleamed in purple and gold, and where the Roman eagles triumphed, the sensual Turk smokes his long curved pipe. Ambition was the ruling passion of those days, and in it and its consequences were merged all the better qualities, and even the commercial enterprise, of ancient states.

If it be strictly true, that "whatever is, is right," then it would be folly to lament the results of the most disastrous occurrences, or the fall of the most glorious empires of ancient or modern times; but, feeling and believing that it is only figuratively so, it is to be regretted that man should commit such enormities as he has, in all ages, been guilty of; and that countries the most blessed by nature, and kingdoms the most renowned for civilization, should be reserved for such spoliation as generally attends the progress of *military enterprise.* We may, perhaps, by analogy form some conception of what Mexico might have now been, if, instead of introducing murder and rapine, Europeans had met the natives at first with the right hand of fellowship and the Gospel of peace. But the ruins of their temples in the hills, and their pyramids in the plains, and a few of their beautiful picture writings, are almost all that now remain of that once golden empire. Robertson speaks slightingly of ruins and relics, which, had he but seen them, or seen accurate accounts of them, he must have acknow-

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ledged do any thing but manifest a slight knowledge in the arts of sculpture and architecture. Humboldt bears ample testimony to the extent of those ruins that were existing in his time. When we think of what those people were, of their roads, aqueducts, and bridges, of which such stupendous remains are said to exist near to Flascola, their civil regulations of posts and police, and other marks of municipal advancement, the many vestiges of their architecture at Cholula and other places, the palaces of Mitzlan, their singularly beautiful temples, their elegant style of picture writing, and their remarkable proficiency in astronomical observations, in which science they had, in respect of their *division of time*, surpassed all nations, whether ancient or modern; when we think of these, we cannot but feel something like regret, that such an empire had not excited the veneration of its invaders, and the *Christian fellowship* of a commercial policy; instead of being plundered of its golden treasures by relentless marauders, seized into the hands of usurping tyrants, and its interesting inhabitants being gradually dispersed or barbarously exterminated. Yet this happened in a (so miscalled) Christian age, and whilst the hypocritical invaders held the very boon of peace in the one hand, while they wielded their bloody sabres in the other!

Nor even yet let us congratulate *ourselves* upon a system of policy that can scarcely be said to have come into operation. What might not the shades of ancient heroes offer in objection to our wisdom,

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ld they now speak out for themselves? They
ght well say, "Where is that change of policy to
ch you refer? What part did the great Cæsar
of yore, but that of which your Napoleon was
other day performing the counterpart! In which
ner acts did Rome exceed the atrocities of those
dern powers which rioted in the spoliation of un-
py Poland, or in the Republic of Athens, the
ous democracy of France, or the inthralment of
riotic Switzerland? In what were our Phalaris
our Thrax Diomedes in any way inferior in
itrary power to your Turkish Sultans, your
guel of Portugal, or your other ambitious
nces of Christendom? In what respect were the
rmers of Assyria, or the magnanimous patriots
ancient provinces, shaking off the yoke of their
ressors, inferior to those of modern Poland,
eece, or Haïti? Or in what material principle
the *tributary* states of Persia, Macedon, or
ne, differ from your British India, or Dutch
a? Are not the same ambitious principles of
cy as formerly still at work? Are not similar
ses hastening on to similar events? Divided by
discontented factions of its own people, weak-
d by their degeneracy, or at once overpowered
some victorious conqueror, a nation naturally
s beneath the yoke of the ruthless hero, and
er becomes like a Roman province or British
le; or the inhabitants, under a fallacious policy,
dually driven or drawn away towards the *nucleus*
ther empires, leave behind them, like the sons

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of Nineveh and Babylon, nothing but the ruins of their former grandeur. The first settlement of the British in India, was not effected by conquest, nor from literally *ambitious* motives; but by permission, for the convenience of commerce;—it was rather avaricious than ambitious; but so nearly are the two principles allied, that the one generally gives birth to the other. The East India Company found little difficulty in effecting their settlement; but the native princes found it afterwards impossible to make them go away—they were resolved to keep the advantage they had gained; and they retained by *arms* what they had at first acquired by obsequious entreaties and flattering address.

We can only expect different results from the past, so far as we recognise different principles of conduct. The men whom the French Revolution, at the close of the last century, brought into power, possessed sentiments of ambition no less unbounded than the Grecian and Roman conquerors of old. Napoleon's ambition was not satisfied with the imperial dignity of France alone, but like Cæsar, he sought to establish an universal empire; or, like the Macedonian, he aimed at no less than the subjection of at least the whole civilized world to his system of policy. Europe shook with the roar of his artillery, and the remote people of Egypt quailed before the eagles of Gaul. The same truth that had been over and over again inculcated by the incidents of former ages, was again to re-

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ceive a further confirmation in the *reaction* which his ambition produced. His arm was against every nation opposed to his peculiar views, and presently every nation was up in arms against him; so that instead of enjoying the glory of that exaltation, which he had once attained, and by prudence might probably have secured; his empire was torn asunder, and he himself driven forth an *exile* to a solitary island, far from the scenes of his fromer greatness, a sad memento of the instability of human power!

Formerly the changes of empires depended principally upon the disposition of neighbouring nations; and the warlike ambition and policy of princes was to acquire new territories. Now they depend, and perhaps more firmly, upon the *allegiance* of the people themselves; and the ambition of the prince in civilized states, is to retain what he has. The relation of *colonies* had not been much considered previously to the American revolutions, by which principle the British and Spanish colonies separated themselves from the mother countries; but since they happened, it has been so maturely weighed, and so exemplified by experience, that governments cannot but see the propriety of rather encouraging than frustrating a separation, which when the colony finds itself sufficiently matured, must evidently be for the reciprocal advantage of both communities. When *remote* colonies increase in population, their circumstances become more complicated, so that it is then desirable to have the

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legislature upon the spot, where its immediate interference may be frequently required. Besides, it is next to impossible for remote legislators, either to comprehend all the wants, or to sympathize with the feelings and interests of distant people in a different clime. The home government will thereby naturally become unpopular with the colonists; and a local one absolutely necessary.

Where one state draws upon itself the vengeance of another, it exposes itself to annihilation, so far at least as its independence is concerned; because if the retaliating country should be victorious, then the aggressive state, as in the case of Algiers very lately, may be subjected to the invading power; but in a domestic revolution, the government alone may be the subject of change, because the people may still remain the same independent community; as in France, when on the flight of their late king they elected another, and so changed the dynasty—unless indeed a revolt takes place, as when the Americans revolted from their allegiance to England; the Greeks from the despotism of the Turks; San Domingo from France; or the Assyrians from the Court of Sardanapalus; and then new and independent empires are formed out of the revolting parts of the old community; or they unite and become blended with other kingdoms. To secure national independence from external disturbances; and to secure a nation from internal commotions; the good of nations must in the one case be consulted; and in the other, the good of the people.

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It is not intended to insinuate that in any of these instances, it was desirable that one nation should make war upon another, or that subjects should revolt from their princes, but to state the consequences of certain circumstances; and if in some of them the good of states and colonies is involved, an appeal to arms is certainly a less satisfactory way than argument for demonstrating popular opinion. "The Pennsylvanians," says Clarkson, "became armed, though without arms; they became strong, though without strength; they became safe, without the ordinary means of safety. The constable's staff was the only instrument of authority amongst them for the greater part of a century; and never, during the administration of Penn, or that of his proper successors, was there a quarrel or a war." It was not until the British Government interfered, and the old leaven of *war* was introduced into the colony, that blood was shed between them and the Indians. One actual experiment such as that of Penn's, is worth a thousand arguments. How different a result followed the landing of the Spaniards in the West Indies! They were armed, and they built forts. They adopted the usual means of self-defence and protection; but they also pursued the too common course that brought upon themselves the recoil of native indignation and vengeance. America declared her independence by the popular voice; and that ought to have been sufficient to conclude all arguments. But Britain appealed to arms—such

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an appeal can only be similarly met—therefore the fault rests with the power that appeals to arms. The generality of national airs and songs are entirely calculated to inspire and keep alive that military enthusiasm, which has hurried many a nation into protracted and ruinous wars; and many a faction into open rebellion, more for the sake of an heroic gratification of false pride, than from a distinct sense of necessity. What youthful Briton has not glowed with wild patriotism and national presumption on hearing his "Rule Britannia," or his "Scot wha hae wi' Wallace bled?" How many a Gallic breast has scarcely been able to contain the little heart within it, that bounded to his "Allons enfans de la patrie!" Shall the differences of rational man be determined by the same law as those of brutes? Let every nation fight its own battles; and no battles be fought but in *self-defence* against physical power; nor in self-defence until reason fail. What is gained by war? "C'est la guerre" says Voltaire, "qui appauvrit necessairement le tresor public, à moins que les depouilles des vaincus ne le remplissent. Depuis les anciens Romains, je ne connais acune nation que se soit enrichée par des victoires. L'Italie, au seizième siècle, n'etait riche que par le commerce. La Hollande n'eut pas subsisté long tems, si elle se fût bornée à enlever la flotte d'argent des Espagnoles, et si les grandes Indes n'avaient pas été l'aliment de sa puissance. L'Angleterre s'est toujours appauvrie par la guerre, même en

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detruisant les flottes Françaises; et le commerce seul l'a en enrichie. Les Algeriens, qui n'ont guére que ce qu'ils gagnent par les pirateries, sont un peuple très miserables." And now they are no people at all!

War disturbs the even flow of public prosperity, drains national resources, gives a false stimulus to trade, which reacts to the ruin of thousands so soon as the cause of excitement ceases—it interrupts the friendly intercourse of nations; sows the rancorous seed of national jealousy and animosity; and perpetuates in the breasts of all concerned, those passions, which like subterranean fires, threaten empires with incessant convulsions, and the world with countless horrors and irretrievable desolation.

There is a principle of resentment and *combativeness* inherent in human nature, which it is the part of reason and Christianity to assuage and curb. But people in general consult habit or custom; and unfortunately, the ancient, the inveterate practice of deciding by an appeal to arms, what reason and persuasion fail immediately to accomplish, too often perverts the popular appeal to reason and justice, into an open declaration of civil war, terminating in bloodshed and anarchy. Teach but the people that arms are a *legitimate* mode of determining any question upon any occasion, and it will not be surprising if they resort to them on all questions, and upon every occasion. A military spirit diffused through the hearts of a people, makes them ever ready to redress by force of physical

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means, with all its attendant mischiefs and counteracting evils, those grievances for which they imagine no *moral remedy* exists. But what are the consequences? Blood is the price of blood, and hatred is reciprocal.

Omnia prius experiri quam armis sapientem decet.

It may be that arms can only be repelled with arms; but he who first appeals to arms is without excuse.

All the ancient empires appear to have acted upon the aggressive, whenever they saw a prospect of thereby extending their domains, and acquiring riches and renown. In a merely natural or secondary point of view, all the mutual hostilities of nations may be referred to some ruling principle in their politics; but if we pursue the question why providence should have put human events into such a train as to bring about such mischievous results, we must at once abandon the political, and assume a *moral agency* actively engaged in modifying the discordant elements of human society. The sacred writings of the Jews, alone, satisfy us on this head, and acquaint us with the purposes of the Almighty, and the means he occasionally makes use of for effecting them. If nations had been suffered to remain quiescent in their iniquities, there certainly would have been very little change in their state for the better; but a continual degeneracy from worse to worse, would probably have ensued, where the principles of that religion, on which alone their

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prosperity and happiness depended, were totally unknown. The Jews knew and neglected them, and were brought to advert to them by their national judgments. By the destruction or dispersion of the great heathen empires of old, there was a grand moral lesson taught to posterity; the strength of paganism was divided, and the knowledge of the truth disseminated. However, still carrying our views beyond moral arguments, we find that the writers of the holy Scriptures at once ascribe the doom of all those nations of which they treat, to their pride and rebellion against God. He made them a scourge to each other. Such is the fate of all those nations which forget God. They forget God; and they at the same time forget all their moral and social duties. The rulers become self-interested and tyrannical; and the people become vicious, avaricious, discontented, and rebellious. The whole empire degenerates into immorality and infatuation, individually and collectively.

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CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS OF THE PEOPLE.

SHIRAZ encompassed with pleasant gardens; and Yemen, the blissful country of oriental panegyric; may appear to him who studies the flowery poesy of the East, places, indeed, peculiarly favoured by Heaven; and like other fairy lands and golden cities, with their crystal fountains and glittering palaces, pourtray the happy features of those blessed places where all things good abound, and terrestrial existence realizes whatever we can conceive desirable of human felicity. The descriptions given by travellers of tropical climates; their luxuriance, their spices, beautiful flowers, and birds of exquisite plume, together with all the dazzling splendour of oriental courts; or the simple independence of some uncivilized nations, which nature, unsolicited, supplies with the necessaries of life, and crowns with the exuberant produce of a prolific soil, are truly calculated to impress upon the mind of the stranger, impassioned ideas of earthly bliss and primeval innocence, which, alas! so soon as he personally ap-

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proaches, recede further and further before him, until they at last vanish away, and he, in his disappointment, exclaims, where are the happy beings of whom I heard! or, what is there about me that *veils* them from my researches; and perverting ease into listlessness, innocence into simplicity, and magnificence into barbarism, presents all things in another form!

Upon the first discovery of the island Haïti, the inhabitants are described to have been the most happy and inoffensive beings that can well be imagined; their food was, for the most part, the spontaneous produce of the soil; and exempt from toil and trouble of almost every description, they passed away their noon beneath the shade of luxuriant trees, and by the side of purling brooks; whilst their evenings were closed with music and dances. Gentle in their nature, and happy in their climate, they appeared to Columbus and his comrades more like the innocent children of a sinless race, than the descendants of the same family as the rest of mankind. Yet these were the same people whom the Spaniards, by a series of the most monstrous barbarities, finally extirpated from the earth. They found the natives artless and helpless, and therefore they compelled them to act subserviently to the directions of civilized minds, and to European advantage. If such an isle could have been secluded from every foreign discovery, and its inhabitants have remained few and simple, then perhaps their present life might in one sense

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have been an enviable state; but exposed as they were to the inroads of others, as well as the perplexities of a gradually increasing community, they yet possessed neither moral courage nor science to enable them to parry the arts and assaults of an enemy, or surmount the novel relation in which they were thus placed with a *civilized* people, adept in all the tricks of trade and arts of war; from what the Spaniards considered to be the most happy, they presently became one of the most wretched of nations. In other parts, where we luxuriate on the benignity of the climate and the riches of the country, we are too apt, from these, to deduce conclusions as to the happiness of the inhabitants, from what such a state of nature is calculated to enhance, instead of adverting to what it really is. The Burmese, amidst all the romance of oriental magnificence and beauty, are not, on that account, more happy or fortunate than ourselves. When the vices of the people and the despotism of the government are taken into the account, what is all the outward splendour of courts, or the bounties of nature, unless they are attended with adequate domestic felicity, and be productive of national improvement? But, as was the case with regard to the great and falsely said glorious empires of antiquity, the people are poor and servile, while their rulers are wealthy and oppressive. The felicity of the one, is in being permitted to enjoy a mere animal existence, and that of the others, in retaining their supremity and

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splendour. Nature is imposing and inviting in what she has done; but man, ignorant of the tendency of what he is doing, undoes all that she has prepared for him. The base and unprincipled character of the inhabitants of most of those states, and the impoverished condition of many, contrasted with the meanest of Christian states, and even with what some of themselves once were, is sufficient to indicate the causes of their moral degradation, and to account at once for their depravity and wretchedness. All that the mass of them do, or even expect to do, is to drag out a listless existence, and die in their irrational faith!

The government of all realms, where the mass of the people are subjugated by *ignorance*, has a natural tendency to absolute power, whatever the form of that government may be. The government erects palaces; the people pay for them: the government declares war and levies taxes, and the people acquiesce; great victories are gained—the nation acquires a glorious reputation—the vanity of the human heart is flattered, and the people are content: the men of power and influence, in absolute states, eat the *kernel*, and cast the *husk* to the poor and needy: their rulers are as gods, and yet drain their very existence out of the strength of the people, who, under the delusion of reckless stupidity, cower in the dust before the gods that they themselves have made. Yet unconscious of their vileness, and equally so of a better state, they are content to submit, although they may be

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imposed upon and oppressed; and in this very ignorance consists the morbid happiness which often prevails in the most despotic countries. The prince sits upon his throne, and dotes to see his subjects, like a truly *swinish multitude*, wallow at its base. There are no revolutions, because the people think not of a change from what they have been used to; there is no questioning of *rights*, because the people are ignorant that they have any. Such is the age of simple ignorance.

But when we turn to our own civilized and free community, we perceive that even the lowest classes are pervaded and surrounded by an active, searching, and illustrating spirit of intelligence and mental energy, sufficient to render observing and inquisitive the minds of the least instructed. The progress and constant occupations of trades are sufficient of themselves to impart an energy and activity to the minds of those employed in them. Their apprehensions are quick, their desires great, and their wants frequently many and distressing: most of the members of them can read, although they have not leisure for properly cultivating their understandings: the pot-house is their *council-chamber*, and there they read and hear *news;* and there they learn arguments which are to them but like matters of tradition from other minds not present, and which they cannot correctly weigh. They learn facts and imbibe opinions; but they possess neither the habit of induction or discrimination to arrange them properly; nor the art of

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ratiocination to consider them well. Now, it is the knowledge of *facts*, making its way into active, but undisciplined minds, which chiefly constitutes the knowledge of the lower orders in modern states, and in this country especially. It is this species of knowledge which tells them of *rights* and *wrongs*, but leaves to their own wisdom or folly the means of obtaining the one and redressing the other. The consequences are obvious.

Again, where useful education comes, it gives an impetus to the powers of mind;—it sets in motion, as it were, the moral mechanism of our nature, supplies men with those principles which are necessary for their future conduct, and habituates them to be observing, inquiring, and rational. But he who has not advanced beyond the *rudiments* of imbibing and forming ideas, cannot be expected either to reason correctly, or to apprehend the force of argumentation, or detect its futility, so readily as the erudite and subtle academician. The mass of the people are of the former description; they are not absolutely ignorant; their minds are active and inquiring; they will both hear and speak; but without religion, or ratiocination, they are as easily led wrong as right; as easily made dupes and tools of, as honest partisans and friends.

And, after all, many of our own labourers and tradesmen, like Athenian slaves, in the midst of a highly intellectual community, have little leisure for properly cultivating their understandings. They go to work early in the day, and, except a

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spare half hour for their meals, they are generally engaged until the evening; there is little time for them to read or meditate, even if they were so disposed. If they have ever passed through scholastic discipline in their early years, they have yet neglected to improve upon it for so long a period, that little of its effects remain: and such is the influence of this state of things, that neither an Athenian slave, nor an untutored American Indian, could well exceed many of the common people of our chief city, in grossness of manners, vulgarity of conversation, and sterility of mind; besides the daring presumption which many have contracted, instead of rational independence. Perhaps some may reply, that they understand each his business, and that is enough; and of what use can any other knowledge be to a tailor, joiner, blacksmith, or shoeblack? But experience teaches us that the well-trained moral mind is apter than any other to learn, to contrive, and in short to do its duty. A man with proper instruction acquires more discrimination, better taste and judgment; and with religion, a better conscience" than the undisciplined mind. Strictly *useful knowledge* is worthy of all; and that is alone useful which is calculated to enlighten the understanding of any one in his calling in life, or to make men more rational and happy, and the more that correct views upon all subjects are disseminated, the greater *unanimity* may be expected to prevail.

But even supposing that the means of instruction

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were more ample than they are, many individuals of those classes have neither the requisite leisure nor inclination to avail themselves of them. Commerce and manufactures are pushed to such an excess by uncontrollable competition, that it occupies nearly all the waking hours of the workmen to complete their daily tasks; and where their time is not so fully absorbed, they generally have little disposition, after a day's work, to commence with mental improvement. The individual exceptions which we here and there find, are sufficient to show us what might be done by others under similar circumstances. Lolling and lounging, swallowing their deleterious potions, cheek by jowl, on the benches of the pothouse or beerhouse and gin-shop, is the degrading way in which the greater portion generally pass their spare time, to the destruction of their health and morals. Neither can it be expected that the brisk atmosphere of the hills, nor the purer delights of science, would be sufficiently powerful stimulants to break them from such bad habits, or to rouse their jaded energies, if even more easy of access. If it be said to their employers, why not allow them an earlier release from their daily bondage, sufficient to concede to them facilities for reading, conversation, and exercise?—it may be replied, that their masters are themselves slaves to popular habits and ways of business; and the nation itself is similarly controlled by the ways and habits of other nations. And, moreover, it may be further said, who can tell the tendency of

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this reading and conversation between men so depraved and politically biassed as many of the working classes are? It may be that "Man is to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow," until all classes become more spiritualized and rational; but efforts should be made in the meantime to render them so. Perhaps it is a wise, although mysterious Providence, which keeps all busy about any thing that preserves from idleness, listlessness, and actual sin.

Youth is not only the season for inculcating right principles of conduct; but it is the only time for the improvement of many, who have at an early age to enter into a busy apprenticeship, or servitude. This is little considered even by those who are apparently most concerned for the welfare of the State. Our working classes, as to the *mass*, are allowed to grow up gross, uninformed, and thus they become the ready agents of designing adventurers, and psuedo-political reformers.

The burning of farm-houses and corn-stacks by the peasantry, the tumultuous assemblies in large towns, and the desperate character that COMBINATIONS amongst workmen frequently assume, although perhaps arising from actual grievances of some description, are yet principally rendered dangerous and disastrous by the brutal ignorance, stupidity, and recklessness of the popular masses engaged in such proceedings. Devoid of religion and mental cultivation, they possess none of those correct views of justice or prudence, nor true ideas

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of their relative situations in society, nor any of those better sympathies, or that fear of God, and respect for man, which truly tend to *liberalize* the human character, and fortify the mind against every wind of doctrine puffed forth by discontented and turbulent spirits; and which, in dire sequence, bring home to the bosoms of all, those things that really belong to their peace. Revealed religion, ripening all the graces and virtues of the heart, and holding in eternal subjection those passions, is the only true guide, which, absent in an age of ignorance, or in an age when men, however otherwise learned, ignorantly lean upon their own resources, are exposed to be thrust through by a thousand spears. They seek in speculative reforms of government, that which is only attainable by a reform of the heart; they make a stir about political to the neglect of *moral* improvement; they aim at a high object; but at the same time overlook the surest means of attaining it;—a way which lies in cultivating a Christian spirit, making them more rational, unanimous, and conscientious. Thus, unless the tone of *public morals* be high and righteous, it matters little to the people's happiness who are their rulers; for although one government may commit less flagrant abuses than another; although one may promote the national glory and splendour more than another; yet, as to the felicity of individuals, a demoralized or irreligious people would neutralize, and render abortive the most strenuous efforts of the best of governments; as a

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virtuous people would, to a great extent, neutralize the errors of the worst. Enter into many of the streets, the hamlets, the families, where this untoward generation broods, and there you will see in detail the elements, the baneful influences of vice and ignorance pervading all its social as well as civil relations. There is the brawling wife, the blasphemous and drunken husband; the heartless parent, and the undutiful child; the inconsiderate master, and the unfaithful servant; the comfortless tenement, and the disorderly tenant; and it is in some places a chance that you escape away from the midst of them without some insult, or personal annoyance. If you traffic with them, you must contend with their worldly-minded cunning. If you attempt to converse with them rationally, it is ten to one that they understand you. Tell them of her "whose ways are pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace," and they will probably laugh you to scorn. Invite them to devise means for disturbing the repose of their neighbour, even by violence; and they are ready to rush like the wild horse to the battle. The cause of this evil and its consequences to the State, are sufficiently obvious.

There cannot be a stronger testimony of the evils resulting from an unenlightened populace, than what it is said occurred during the prevalence of the *cholera*, in several parts of Europe, arising from the infatuation of an ignorant peasantry, and untutored rabble, who in their stupidity were led

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to attribute the pestilence itself to the very things and expedients that physicians and informed Christian men had recommended as the best safeguards against it. Whether all the monstrosities at that period perpetrated, were the result of the false suspicion alluded to, or were the expression of *political discontent*, as some then insinuated, matters little here; for they still show how inhuman and infatuated are the minds of the lower order of the people, in most countries.

But then it may be said, and said with truth, that this infatuation has manifested itself not in an age of ignorance, but of boasted intelligence. Yet it has not prevailed amongst the intelligent, but the ignorant. Although it has been the concomitant, it does not appear to have been the consequence of intelligence: therefore this concurrence far from being a circumstance of ill omen, may rather be considered a reason why we may hope for better days, when rational intelligence shall eclipse the manifest *ignorance* of the age.

There is, notwithstanding, an influential portion of our population which, together with men of moderate education, are also under the influence of Christian principles. As the light shines from the east unto the west, so in whatever country Christianity is known in its purity, its light effulges far and wide through the length and breadth of the land; and the latent influence of its principles, like the hidden operations of light in the vegetable world, are more extensive and important than,

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until elucidated by investigation, we might suppose. Hence we perceive people otherwise ignorant, and even ignorant of the higher principles of our religion; yet acting in many of the social relations of life, and even in turbulent times, with a discretion that cannot otherwise be explained, than by reference to the unobserved workings of the Christian spirit diffused around them. The reciprocal influence of the human mind is very extensive. The conduct of one person towards another is generally *reciprocal.* A tyrant makes tyrants of all around him: a good and wise man diffuses goodness and wisdom. A practical Christian christianizes the characters of those with whom he has to do. Though Cæsar should hold a blanket before the sun, yet would light make its way.

Now, we are bidden to remark the consequences. The thrones of *absolute* monarchs are shaken, governments are dissolved, and the slave too becomes emancipated! Men, when possessed of improved understanding, will not submit to have their own rights, or the just rights of their fellow men, usurped or trampled upon by others. Negroes who have been taught to know and feel that they are men and accountable beings, will no longer endure to be treated otherwise than men. On a Christian principle this is strictly correct, though human policy may negative it at first view.

And are these changes effected by *violence?* By whom is it committed? Not by those who, rather

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than appeal to arms for redress, would tolerate a *Nero;* who obey their rulers and masters; but by the good and gentle, and also the froward; who maintain their opinions by argument or protest, and not by violence. That violence is the doing of those who recognize no such principles. It occurs naturally in that dawn of religious freedom wherein the rational part of the popular masses are first aroused from somnolency into activity and energy by the light of truth, or by the busy details of increasing national trade, and individual intercourse; wherein they are brought to hear and read of rights and wrongs, under constitutional governments; but had not previously learned any other resort for enforcing their own demands than what unregenerate nature dictated.

At a time when printing was unknown, manuscripts being the only medium of circulating general information, book learning could not be expected to spread very extensively amongst the commonalty; therefore it cannot well be said that either books or education, could have been the occasion of the tumults, persecutions, and civil wars, which then took place; nor does it yet appear, that the more general diffusion of knowledge has any direct tendency to *aggravate* such events; but, on the contrary, blended with religious instruction, it forms the surest means of bridling the otherwise ungovernable passions of unruly men; whilst it cannot be dissembled, that education without Christian principles to control its application,

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may be more frequently directed to bad than good purposes. The leaders and actors in the great French revolution, at the close of the last century, were men confessedly devoid of all religion, many of whom scorned both learning and science, and most of them as ignorant as depraved;—the consequences which ensued were too horrible even for contemplation. If we frequently witness discontents and tumults of minor extent alleviated in their consequences, by the effects of instruction and religious influence upon the general domestic habits of the persons engaged in them, it is but reasonable to conclude, that the dissemination of such influences would have an extended beneficial tendency in the more deliberative character that popular assemblies would in consequence assume.

There are scarcely any revolutions among modern states, or outrages and disturbances at home, which some persons, reasoning abstractedly, do not attribute to the baneful effects of reading and writing; whereas, in reality, facts that are constantly occurring, prove, beyond all doubt, that the *majority* of persons committed to prison for crimes and political disturbances, are individuals of the most ignorant order, many of whom can neither *read* nor *write*. And even those common outrages are rendered much less dangerous to the community than they used to be, on account of the check which the more intelligent part of the labouring classes has imposed upon the more ignorant and headstrong.

Neither is it denied that *popular* education may

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produce political changes tantamount to revolutions, or even accelerate the horrors of actual revolution. But who shall draw the line beyond which instruction shall *not* be carried? Who can say thus far shalt thou come and no farther? while you talk about it, the thing is done—the Rubicon is passed—the tide overwhelms you: *knowledge* must now proceed in some form, and it is for them who have the power, to see that those who receive it, imbibe with it truly sound principles, which shall teach them to make a right use of it!

The better informed that the different orders of society are, the more they will think for themselves, and the more readily will they concur in opinion, as to the important truths daily developed to their understandings. Then it follows, that despotic sovereigns may be deposed, as lately was the case in Brunswick, or France; and governments be modified, in accordance with the more liberal opinions of the age. Indeed, there can be no doubt that popular instruction has this tendency; but it cannot be maintained that the consequences are likely to be so dreadful as those which have attended the march of ambitious leaders, or an infatuated multitude in barbarous and unenlightened communities; or even as when a Robespierre and his blood-thirsty myrmidons, led their thousands to the death! The better qualified the people are for reflection, the more strenuously may they assert their opinions, whilst they are at the same time less likely to be made the dupes of pretended patriots.

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And, although political agitations and changes may become more frequent, yet tyranny and usurpation are less likely to prevail where the people are generally well informed and opinionative, than where they are uneducated and subservient to the opinions of others. In the support of his audience, thinking or unthinking, is the legitimate power of the orator, although he may exert an influence, and make a use of it, altogether illegitimate. And the consequences of such subserviency may be justly apprehended, lest by the influence of mischievous leaders, the physical force of brutal ignorance should at any time be set in array against the intelligent and virtuous part of the community. The better informed that the people become, the more may we expect of *rational reforms*, and less of popular riots; more respect to privileges and equalization of public burthens, and less grinding of the poor, whose rational appeals, constitutionally made, should never be disregarded any more than they can be long successfully resisted.

Above all, it is to sound religious instruction that we must mainly look for permanent social order and improvement—it is this which tends more than any thing else to curb popular passions, refine the social sensibilities, and regulate the spring of all relative duties. For it must be observed, that although the consequences which naturally follow, when a people's minds are opened to a conviction of wrongs, are opposition and resistance to tyranny and oppression of every description, yet it is pecu-

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liar to Christianity alone to moderate and to inculcate a hopeful submission, even to injuries, if they cannot be redressed otherwise than by *physical* violence. And this is most consonant with reason; for on the one hand, it excludes violence; the use of which, in any instance, only habituates men of different opinions to repeat it, as often as they desire to enforce their will upon others; and, on the other hand, it reduces men to the necessity of making every political change, the result of a moral conviction of its true *expediency*, not in a mere party, but in the influential majority of the community.

Thus, the people having become more enlightened and reflective, revolve in their breasts the materials of political systems; and big with projects and resolutions, they give utterance to the conceptions of their minds. All feel that the state of society is not that which it ought to be; and, according to the injuries or sufferings of each class, some devise one remedy, and some another. Some may say, the age of ignorance was better than this war of opinions. But only let us look back to the time of our second *Richard*. "The faint dawn of the arts and of good government in that age," writes Hume, "had excited the minds of the populace in different states of Europe, to wish for a better condition, and to murmur against those chains which the laws, enacted by the haughty nobility and gentry, had so long imposed upon them. The commotions of the people in Flanders, and the mutiny of the peasants in France, were the natural

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effects of this growing spirit of independence; and the report of these events being brought into England, where personal slavery, as we learn from Froissard, was more general than in any other country in Europe, had prepared the minds of the multitude for an insurrection. One John Ball also, a seditious preacher, who affected low popularity, went about the country, and inculcated on his audience the principles of the first origin of mankind from one common stock, their equal right to liberty, and to all the goods of nature, the tyranny of artificial distinctions, and the abuses which had arisen from the degradation of the more considerable part of the species, and the aggrandisement of a few insolent rulers. These doctrines, so agreeable to the populace, and so conformable to the ideas of primitive equality, which are engraven in the hearts of all men, were greedily received by the multitude, and scattered the sparks of that sedition which the present tax (three groats on every person, male and female, above fifteen years of age,) raised into a conflagration." Now let us see the consequences when an ignorant people rose to "vindicate their native liberty. "Before the government had the least warning of danger, the disorder had grown beyond control or opposition—the populace had shaken off all regard to their former masters; and being headed by the most audacious and criminal of their associates, who assumed the feigned names of Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, Hob Carter, and Tom Miller, by which they were fond of denoting their

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mean origin, they committed every where the most outrageous violence on such of the gentry or nobility as had the misfortune to fall into their hands."

There cannot be a doubt that these people were inconsiderately taxed, priest-ridden, and neglected, any more than that the outrages which they perpetrated were not essential to the removal of their burthens. Such is the infatuated feeling of many of the unhappy Irish at this day, led on to mischief by mercenary leaders; and similar, is that of a large proportion of our own lower orders—their argument, or rather song, like that of the former, is—

> When Adam delv'd, and Eve span,
> Where was then the gentleman?

And where was then the weaver, the grocer, the sailor, the merchant, the lawyer, and all those trades, professions, and ranks, which naturally arise to individual advantage in the progress of society, and which is only impeded by an accumulation of the surplus produce of labour? They attack individuals, possessions, and rank, indiscriminately; as if such and such orders in the State were the cause of, because they are *contemporary* with, the evils of which they complain. They perceive not, or they overlook, the particular abuses which are the real cause. The prince alluded to, lived in a more magnificent manner than perhaps any of his predecessors or successors. His household consisted of ten thousand persons—he had three hundred in

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his kitchen; and all the other offices were furnished in proportion. Such prodigality was probably the source of many exactions by purveyors, and was one chief reason of the public discontents. But what would have been the reason assigned by the *multitude* for this or that act of tumultuary outrage? Perhaps they would have answered in the simple strain of their favourite couplet. It was the reckless expression of popular feeling vented by ignorant and undisciplined minds!

Will it be said that we find violent expedients, under certain circumstances, justified by the most intelligent writers. Let us now see what those circumstances are. "There is an exception," says *Grotius*, "in respect of which civil laws are not to be obeyed—it is in the case of crimes of such a flagitious nature that we at first view recoil from them." This is vague; and what can it apply to, except to such flagitious violence on the part of the rulers, as calls for immediate personal defence, under the emergency, on the part of the subject? Whichever way this may be considered instigated by such deeply injured feelings, the Negroes in San Domingo revolted against the French. Nature is the same in all ages, and when driven to extremities, resorts to the same violent expedients. "At nos non imperium neque divitias petimus; quarum rerum causâ bella atque certamina omnia inter mortales sunt; sed libertatem, quam nemo bonus, nisi cum animâ simul amittit." But this is very different from the outrage of a turbulent multitude;

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who know not what good end their atrocities are to answer. An ignorant people neither have any distinct view of the cause of their grievances, nor know they how to remove them. An intelligent people may have a well defined view of the cause of their perplexities, but even they may *err* in the policy which they adopt. Their rulers also may be equally convinced of the necessities of the former; but may be themselves deceived in the measures they resort to with the very best intentions. Then it is hard to tell whether those people who are wretched because ignorant of good; or those who knowing better things, are wretched because they do not attain them, are in the worse condition.

But this is only admitting that it is human to err. So far as human happiness depends upon social well-being, it is essential to it that the community direct its laws with a view to the general good; and although it cannot be predicted of this or that law, that it will ultimately prove the best, yet an intellectual people have a better chance of judging of its desirableness, than an ignorant people. The ignorant are generally rash, and always arbitrary in their proceedings; and the latter, persevering but circumspect, although the labour of both may be vain. Thus, the wisest and best men are liable to errors and absurdities, and the laws of even the most intelligent policy may prove bad, owing to human imperfection; so that if a community were to depend upon the wisdom of its *Senate* for promoting individual happiness, it would

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certainly in most instances be disappointed; whilst on the contrary, we perceive in different ages, and even amongst ourselves, that people individually virtuous, may enjoy at least a very considerable share of individual prosperity and happiness under a very inefficient administration. For unless the people be virtuous as well as intelligent, they may after all, as in Athens of old, be in eminent danger of becoming the slaves and victims of their own mutual jealousies, vices, and passions, or the tools of designing adventurers.

Whilst the barren wastes, the miserable hovels, and utter wretchedness of fertile Ireland, may in a great degree be attributed to religious discord, which is constantly adding to the moral degradation, the ignorance, the indifference, and comparative barbarism of the labouring classes; on the other hand, in a less congenial climate, we, in Scotland, see the hills covered with pasture and flocks, and the once marshy grounds converted into luxuriant meadows, the result of a greater degree of moral instruction, as well as physical culture. The peasant in the morning goes forth to his labour, and returns contented in the evening to the bosom of his family—and now "the supper crowns their simple board:"—

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They round the ingle form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently laid aside,

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His lyart-haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
"And let us worship God!" he says with solemn air,
Then kneeling down, to heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband, prays.

This portrait is certainly applicable. It is to be wished that it were universally so. But how is the picture reversed, when we contemplate an ignorant, impoverished, and complaining peasantry. Corn stacks, barns, and farm-houses set on fire by poor deluded men, who reflect not that the very acts of their desperation render their lot still more desperate. Yet, when we inquire who those men are, whose *frenzy* leads to such melancholy consequences, it is some consolation to find, that almost invariably, they are the untutored, the most ignorant, and depraved; for the more enlightened know too well, that hard as their political case may be, their remedy is not in their own hands, any more than the cause of their distress is in the hearts of their landlords and neighbours; but, in those circumstances, those fluctuations of trade, of the price of commodities, and demand for labour, to which an active, but perhaps too speculative community is ever subject. When population was less, and manufactories were in their infancy, and commerce was not so extended as at present; then it was not so difficult to procure employment, and the national affairs were not so fluctuating. The concerns of the little country

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shopkeeper are not so precarious as those of the great speculators and merchants of the city; but whilst he has less chance of opulence, his life is also commonly more tranquil. So with regard to the State at large, when its affairs were more circumscribed, there was less vacillation in public concerns: but now the peasant and operative, like other people, experience the effects of the change; they desire to interfere, and to have their own demands and expectations adjusted to those of others. The social machinery has thus become more complex, and difficult to be kept in order; and under such circumstances, the better knowledge that individuals possess of their own relative duties, and the more enlightened they are by useful knowledge and religious instruction, the better ought they to know how to apply them to the regulation of their own conduct, and discern more clearly what they may expect from others. But "the big ha' Bible," is the book above all others, from which they are to learn those fundamental duties—the prominent object in the scene, so strikingly illustrated by Scotia's favourite bard, —the "saint, the father, and the husband," is the character we there so much admire. Let the unhappily deluded peasantry of Ireland be properly instructed in those principles which are contained in the *unmutilated* word of God, and their agitation will be of the *moral* and not of the *sanguinary* type, to the terror of peaceable possession, and even life itself!

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CHAPTER IV.

THE PEOPLE BECOME DISCONTENTED.

An ignorant people may often be equally happy under a weak, or a wise prince; because they consider not the impropriety of his conduct; because they dream not of any other elysium than that which they enjoy, of a contented breast. A civilized, a knowing people, on the contrary, regard the propriety of the words and actions of their rulers, and the possibility of an improvement in their own condition. If these be not such as they would have them, they become at once dissatisfied and tumultuous.

An absolute prince, uncontrolled by popular opinion, and undistracted by conflicting councils, possesses the power of acting more promptly either for the public good or ill, than a responsible, or mixed legislature: but a responsible legislature, being under the control of popular opinion, better secures the public interests. All great public measures have been thus deliberately brought about, from *Magna Charta*, to the last Reform Act.

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Until the time of James the First, freedom of debate was scarcely known in the House of Commons, for it was seldom asserted as a *right* by the members, and never suffered by the Crown. The principal part of the nation was thus prohibited from interfering in those acts of state, which were within the functions of the executive part of the government, and the prerogatives of the prince, yet which most materially concerned the interests of the whole community. By such restrictions the Commons were excluded from fully sharing in the adjustment of their own rights. Some of the members perceived the impropriety and tyrannizing tendency of this state of things, yet it was not until the reign last mentioned, that the Parliament openly and effectually asserted their independence and privileges. So gradual and slow, but sure, is the progress of popular opinion well directed, towards attaining that which is really a public good. The great charter itself was the result of a tardy, but ultimately decisive expression of *popular opinion.*

The national character in countries subject to an absolute lawgiver, may assume the stamp of the laws which he makes. And on the other hand, the character of the laws in states where a popular control influences the legislature, presents the aspect of the national character. It is curious, though often difficult, to trace the causes which have given a characteristic turn to the manners and customs of a people.

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The characteristics of the Spartans may be deduced from the peculiar laws of that state, dictated by an individual lawgiver. Thus, about eight centuries before the Christian era, we find the Lacedemonians assuming a character which the inhabitants of Asia Minor and the rest of Greece had never possessed. The laws of Lycurgus, as wonderful perhaps as singular, entirely set aside all thoughts of industry, and instead of encouraging his subjects in the manual arts and the prosecution of science, ordered all the youth of the State to be inured to hardships, fasting, and athletic exercises, so that they might the better endure the vicissitudes of war. And to these were superadded practice in cunning and theft, to render them more expert in their conduct towards their enemies. The treasures and provision necessary for the support of the people, were amassed in public storehouses, and were raised by the industry of slaves, whose numbers were kept up by prisoners of war. Unnatural as such laws might be, yet they were found to answer the expectations of the lawgiver, and to promote the warlike pre-eminence of the Spartans. Probably no civil laws were better adapted for giving a characteristic turn to the habits of a people. This they certainly effected in the course of time. The Lacedemonians became remarkably brave and cunning, as well as patient in enduring hardships. They depended more upon the bondage of some nations and the insignificancy of others, for their grandeur, than upon their own

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internal resources, and the fruits of national industry and utility; so that ultimately, whilst other nations were becoming eminent, they proportionally declined. Similar to Sparta in constitution and manners, was her descendant Rome; and there can scarcely be a greater contrast between the policy of two countries, than between that of Athens and Rome, particularly as relates to navigation and the arts and sciences. Mechanical and sedentary pursuits were by the Roman law assigned to slaves and aliens; which same class of persons were, on the contrary, by the Athenian polity, alone excluded from engaging in them; and that independent idleness, which was encouraged by the laws of Sparta, was by the Athenian law, exposed to civil prosecution.

The Athenians became a philosophical; and the Romans and Spartans, a warlike people. A Spartan on beholding a mechanic, felt as if he were in the presence of one who was associated with works disreputable to a patriot, and despicable in their employment. The Athenian, on the other hand, respected him whom he had been accustomed to view in connexion with affairs that profited the community, and were cultivated by men of talent, and honoured by the people. The former, in obedience to his own laws and turn of mind, would oppose commerce and literature; whilst the latter, for a similar reason, would applaud and encourage them.

In Sparta the laws were dictated by an in-

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dividual lawgiver; in Athens they emanated indirectly from the people, and were therefore more likely to be adapted to the public welfare than the former, inasmuch as responsible legislators are more likely to consult the public good, than absolute monarchs.

When we perceive how materially the customs and laws of a country tend to affect the convenience and character of the people, we at once see the importance of a popular control over a legislature,—a control of opinion, inculcating enlightened and practical views of good legislation.

So long as the character of a people is dependent upon the example and injunctions of their superiors, and laws arbitrarily enacted by rulers alone, there is no fixed principle of public conduct conducing to the public weal. The national character and popular interests, in such a case, vacillate with the character and conduct of a few leading individuals, or perhaps of one man. Thus the appropriation of any favourite theory, by a popular legislator, has often been re-echoed by the public, without any regard to its probable or real tendency; and a departure from it, or opposition to it, considered as a dereliction of the popular welfare. Godwin remarks, "However imperfect might be the political constitution under which they lived, mankind have ordinarily been persuaded to regard it with a sort of reverential and implicit respect. The privileges of Englishmen and the liberties of Germany; the splendour of the most Christian,

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the solemn gravity of the Catholic king, have each afforded a subject of exultation to the individuals who shared, or thought they shared, in the advantages these terms were conceived to describe. Each man was accustomed to deem it a mark of the peculiar kindness of Providence, that he was born in the country, whatever it was, to which he happened to belong. The time may come which shall subvert these prejudices. The time may come, when men shall exercise the piercing search of truth upon the mysteries of government, and view, without prepossession, the defects and abuses of the constitution of their country." The time has indeed come, with both its blessings and its *curses;* and men have now to learn that, "effectual demolition is not the offspring of crude projects and precipitate measures."

Education and experience have taught the people to look after their own interest; and have given rulers to see that they are under a popular surveillance, and must consult the interests of the community; that the laws they make must be framed to that end, or that they must inevitably incur the anathema, and perhaps vengeance, of an injured and indignant public.

Yet, in spite of the best legislation, we must observe, that in the course of many generations, from change of time and circumstances, some laws become obsolete, and some are perverted, so that instead of an harmonious system of government, our laws have hitherto, in a great measure, become an

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artificial amalgamation of heterogeneous principles. Blackstone, in a letter written when he first commenced the study of *Littleton's Tenures*, aptly remarks, "I have sometimes thought that the common law, as it stood in Littleton's day, resembled a regular edifice, where the apartments were properly disposed, leading one into another, without confusion; where every part was subservient to the whole, all uniting in one beautiful symmetry, and every room had its distinct office allotted to it. But as it is now swollen, shrunk, curtailed, enlarged, altered, and mangled by various and contradictory statutes, (and in other ways), it resembles the same edifice with many of its most useful parts pulled down, with preposterous additions in other places, of different materials and coarse workmanship, according to the whim, or prejudice, or private convenience of the builders. By which means the communication of the parts is destroyed, and their harmony quite annihilated; and now it remains a huge irregular pile, with many noble apartments, though awkwardly put together, and some of them of no visible use at present."

We well know that in the progress of society, new circumstances continually arise, which require suitable provisions to meet their respective exigencies: but in doing this, it has too frequently happened, that the ancient basis of the constitution has been made subservient to the most unsuitable innovations, which in the course of time have become familiar to our view, or whose original excel-

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lence has become entirely obsolete;—still, they were the contrivances of our ancestors to meet the occasions of their particular eras and times, when less experience, and greater superstition and precaution, led them to adopt schemes and indulge speculations, which, even whilst we are in the act of demolishing, we extol for their ingenuity, and admire for their utility. It is not that we regard the results of their genius and industry as either useless or despicable; but it is that we are made acquainted with events which had not then happened, and we perceive modes of compassing the purposes of society, other than those which were suggested to them. If, in other times, the subtle craftiness of monks was essential to the accomplishment of their designs, yet is that no longer the principle by which the people in a liberal and enlightened age either desire or deserve to attain the objects of society. The principles whereon the senate is rationally required to act, are those which are taught by experience. Such only are those which common sense comprehends, and which are really important to the welfare of a kingdom, adapting the laws to the necessities of the times. According to the circumstances of society at different periods, new laws may become necessary, and perhaps some laws may be altogether dispensed with. The more populous and civilized that a nation becomes, the more multifarious are the transactions of society, and the more complex become all artificial rules of conduct;

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therefore, just as the transactions of the community multiply, so should its rules or laws be rendered more and more simple, otherwise frequent confusion and many annoying vexations must necessarily impede the social machinery.

It may, moreover, be conceived, that though the laws themselves were excellent, yet that their practical application may be neglected and abused. it follows, next to securing good laws and forms of government, the attention of a discreet people is wisely attracted to the preservation of an established religion, the appointment of good judges, the employment of good men, and the love of a good administration. *Bacon*, in noticing the character of Queen Elizabeth, remarks, "As for her government, I assure myself, I shall not exceed, if I do affirm that this part of the island never had forty-five years of better times; and yet not through the calmness of the season, but through the wisdom of her regimen. For if there be considered on the one side, the truth of religion established; the constant peace and security; the good administration of justice; the temperate use of prerogative, not slackened, nor much strained; the flourishing state of learning, sortable to so excellent a patroness; the convenient estate of wealth and means, both of crown and subject; the habit of obedience, and the moderation of discontents: and there be considered, on the other side, the differences of religion; the troubles of neighbour countries; the ambition of Spain, and oppo-

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sition of Rome; and then that she was solitary and of herself: these things, I say, considered, as I could not have chosen an instance so recent and so proper, so, I suppose, I could not have chosen one more remarkable or eminent to the purpose, concerning the conjunction of learning in the prince with felicity in the people."

But however wise Queen Elizabeth may have been in her day and generation, it is scarcely probable that the entire policy of her times would be equally successful and approved in the present age of inquiry and censure. Her wisdom in general matters was doubtlessly adapted to her times, and it is equally the wisdom of rulers to adopt their policy to the popular circumstances at all times, without infringing on those fundamental principles by which the foundations of Church and State are to be upheld.

We adverted to the advantages to be derived from a rational popular control over a legislature; and also to the defects incident to governments and laws, from the change of circumstances, which, without any other imperfections or abuses, may naturally attract the attention of an inquiring people. It is, therefore, not surprising to find, that when knowledge is more diffused, and the popular intelligence becomes developed, the people should advert to defects and abuses which, whether they materially influence their happiness or not, are, notwithstanding, fit subjects for the correcting hand of an enlightened age.

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But if in by-gone times subjects were ignorant of their rights, the rulers were also much in the dark, with respect to their particular duties. We are not to suppose that rulers were wilfully preposterous in their legislation. Their faults were, in the main, the errors of the times in which they lived; they arose partly from want of information and experience, and partly from want of consideration; all of which short-comings, as well as the failings common to human nature, are as likely to be the sources of many errors in our own and future generations, as ever they have been in times gone by. Yet the "day-spring which has visited us," is likely to open the eyes as well of people to their rights, as of rulers to their duties. It seems to us as if every thing affecting the public welfare, had been once expected to have been accomplished by legislative interference. Sumptuary laws were made to restrain the vices of individuals; and monopolies were maintained at the incalculable expense of treasure and human life, in order to aggrandize states and individuals. But when men became convinced that individual vices could not thus be restrained, but that the principal effect of sumptuary laws was to trammel the affairs of the public, and provoke its indignation; and that every one was able to manage his own concerns best, and would naturally be cautious about ruining himself, they then relinquished the absurd expedient of sumptuary laws. And when governments discovered that the benefits which they anticipated

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from their monopolies, were not in fact realized; but that on the contrary, commercial enterprise was frustrated, and public discontent fomented, they began to adopt a more liberal policy, and to see the folly of their former jealousies. It is thus by the gradual development of enlightened views of legislation, and not by *faction* and *violence*, that useful reforms have been, and alone can be, with safety and certainty effected, and a generous toleration established.

The interference of civil laws for the purpose of encouraging or discouraging particular branches of business, renders the basis of trade purely artificial; so that unless legislation could step by step follow the course of nature's circumstances, our ships will ever and anon find themselves aground, and likewise our workmen find themselves deserted, in positions where the laws have fixed them, and whence an unlooked for change in produce or in labour, has in spite of the ordinances of states turned away the elements upon which they depended. If they had been left to themselves, they might then have adapted themselves to circumstances, and have still followed, in another way, and perhaps another place, the fluctuating stream with advantage.

And the very means which a nation may adopt for the purpose of monopoly, or of injuring the commerce of her neighbours, are those which will most certainly curtail and ruin her own. By her duties upon her imports, she lessens the demand for them

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at home; and by her duties upon her exports, she lessens the demand for them abroad. She abridges her own produce, checks her own industry, and paralyzes her energies. What ambition is in a warlike, monopoly is in a commercial policy. The former causes much positive mischief; and the latter prevents much positive benefit to the empire.

And while governments unnecessarily for the protection of public rights, meddle with the free course of common events, the transactions between man and man, and between man and his maker, it is not to be expected that mankind should ever be exempt from frequent political convulsions and national revolutions.

Civil liberty may be defined in the language of Burlamagni, to consist in "the right which nature gives to all mankind, of disposing of their persons and property after the manner they judge most consonant to their happiness, on condition of their acting within the limits of the law of nature, and that they do not in any way abuse it, to the prejudice of other men." Or, even according to Paley, "civil liberty is the not being restrained by any law, but what conduces in a greater degree to the *public welfare*."

It is true in a general sense, that a government ought not to interfere in the *details* of human affairs—that every individual should be at liberty to turn his circumstances to his own advantage—that he knows best how to conduct his own affairs —that what is for the good of individuals, is also

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a public benefit—and that what only concerns individuals, is no concern of the public. This is indeed all very desirable; and if human nature were altogether perfect, and not subject to be warped and influenced by many vices and failings, it might be realized. But as individuals are at present governed by very circumscribed views, and by various selfish motives, and even base designs, it is generally allowed that although a government ought not to act an arbitrary part in matters of conscience, business, or domestic concerns, yet that it may interfere parentally to protect every individual in the State, in the enjoyment of these rights and privileges as far as is consistent with the interests of the entire community. Hence even when it interferes for fiscal purposes, unless it deal with an equal hand, it generally incurs a tolerable share of public odium, and very probably much more than its due, when we consider the equalizing tendency of prices and wages to counteract the pressure of any unequal impost; yet when it appears to exceed expediency, the reasonableness of a clamour for retrenchment cannot fairly be questioned, since the effect of taxes is to raise prices, consequently to limit the demand for labour, and diminish the available resources of the country. Let the rulers of empires beware how they grind the poor, for it cannot be done with impunity. And let the poor beware of their own vicious habits under a recklessly increasing population, which curtails their resources infinitely more than the most reckless

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imposts of which they ever heard. There are vices and evils against which a government may protect individuals from becoming the victims of them, either in themselves or other people, and for this purpose may restrict them in the enjoyment of their personal and social privileges—in the means, time, and place of exercising them; but there are also miseries arising from private and moral delinquency, which eluding the grasp of civil power, have no remedy but in the moral means which may be brought to bear upon the hearts and conduct of the wretched thousands whose vices and improvidence bring ruin upon themselves, and entail it upon a pining progeny; which, with a due regard to their own and their country's resources, had better never have existed, were it not in order to rise up in judgment upon the depravity and sins of their race. It may be thought well for rulers not to interfere with the conduct of individuals; but it were better if there were no occasion for its interposition. If individuals and classes were to consider the welfare of others as well as their own, there would be less occasion for *regal* interference, and less vacillation in the affairs of society. People forget that their own vices and follies are the sole cause of many of their misfortunes, and much legislation; and that if such legislation were the best which human wisdom could devise, their own follies and vices would materially counteract its beneficial tendency. On the other hand, legislators sometimes forget that

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as the circumstances of the society change, their laws ought to adapt themselves to the new state of things.

One might think from the sentiments expressed by many, that they imagined themselves the only objects of consideration in a state, and that *their* circumstances were a criterion for all. But the experience of to-day modifies the opinion we had formed yesterday—the information of what others think, or of what has befallen them, ought to convince the individual that his mind and circumstances are not the criterion of others. Every day brings its news. If it were practicable, probably every day as well as every generation, would require its political as well as individual reform. It is common to hear even well informed persons express their anxiety for the consequences of every legislative change, because they see not where all this tends; little considering that it is of the essence of human government in the progress of society to conform itself at all times, as far as prudently may be, to human circumstances; and consequently, that we can no more set defined bounds to such events, than we can to those of our private affairs. If such reformations were constantly attended to, they would occur gradually and naturally; but being too long neglected, the people call for rash and sweeping measures, too often the effort of theory to rectify all defects at once, without regard to the consequences of a failure in the attempt. The opposition made by

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inconsiderate legislators to needful legislative improvements, defers the day until the people, ever factious, become the organs of legislation themselves; and a further opposition on the part of the government, brings it into collision with the people's sentiments; and hurries the nation into tumult and revolution, when instead of a rational and natural transition with our circumstances from reform to reform, we are all at once hurled back again into a *chaos*, whence perhaps, one generation will hardly suffice to replace us where we were.

But, inquire certain rulers, "is it every popular clamour, is it every factious demand, with which we are to acquiesce? Is it not rather the voice of popular intelligence which is to affect our conduct? If this be not heard to whom are we to hearken? To the barking of the blood-hound of revolution? To the hurricane of popular passion? To the fitful frenzy of discontent, that knows not how to realize the idealities of a distempered mind?" Oh! ye short-sighted legislators, hearken to our reply. We would not wish to see the national councils swayed and blown about by every breath of passion, and wind of doctrine, needlessly and factiously vented by individuals or multitudes. This would be to render the government of the people the mere *dominance* of parties and autocrats, who consult neither their own nor the public weal, but the pitiful gratification of private and party pretensions, of which it is lamentable to confess, that rulers

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in all ages have too often been themselves at once the instigators and the objects.

In an age of intelligence, it is not the outcry of faction which can rule the destinies of a knowing and discerning people. However successful such expedients might formerly have been, when politics were the monopoly of senators and princes, were uninfringed by any besides, yet it is far otherwise in times when the public mind is awakened to a *just sense* of the relative position of rulers and people, and when the latter exercise their undoubted right of censors upon the conduct of the former in a constitutional and becoming form.

But it is possible for a people to condemn existing circumstances without perceiving a *remedy;* or at any rate, without being able to show that the remedy proposed is calculated to effect the purpose intended. Yet if men were only to be governed by *proofs* of the ultimate tendency of present measures, every one must see that the affairs of life would soon stand still. Therefore, it is in general sufficient for legislation if men do but see the fair prospect of an immediate benefit likely to result from any measure they may propose, being first satisfied that at any rate there is an impropriety in the existing circumstances of society. This is all that they can in general hope to effect, because ulterior advantages are commonly beyond the reach of our calculations; and this, therefore, is quite a sufficient, as it is a reasonable and wise motive, to provide for present exigencies,

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leaving to posterity their own part to act, their own wants to discover, and remedies to find out, each generation successively conforming itself to its own circumstances, and perpetuating by another link that consecutive chain which reaches from the beginning. And if the ordinary vacillation of human circumstances of themselves call for such popular scrutiny, how much more do the autocracy and errors of rulers themselves render such interference not only plausible but absolutely necessary. It is within our constant experience, that people in general are guided by their views of experimental effects, without previous theoretical demonstration, as the merchant by his prospect of profit and loss, without even pretending to comprehend the theory of *exchange*. So that it is neither absurd nor unwise for an intelligent people to advocate political statistic measures, of which they have a distinct practical conviction of the benefit, although they may not possess any idea of its theoretical bearings.

Let it not, however, be here understood that we place any confident reliance upon popular political wisdom or experiments; or that we would approve them beyond what might be strictly consistent with social order; for we feel persuaded, that however intelligent a people may be, however thoroughly they may understand the details of legislation, and however distinct their views of social well-being may be; yet that no measure nor law, however sound in theory, can become practically developed to the satisfaction of its advocates,

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unless the people, who are the objects of it, be themselves subservient to the control of other laws, chiefly of a moral and holy character, which shall bring their thoughts and actions to coincide in excellence with the expected political perfection of a wise and well defined system.

Unfortunately it has hitherto happened, that the most clamorous and outrageous pretenders to *political* reformation, have been those whose discontents and distresses may be more readily and truly accounted for in their own unrighteous and unsteady habits of domestic and public life, than by any adequate cause to be discovered in the conduct of the affairs of State. If to any one circumstance more than another, the social distress of the lower orders can be attributed, it may very probably be placed with truth to the account of the imposture and improvidence to which our abused system of poor-laws has held out but too tempting a premium, as well as to those improvident marriages, encouraged by parishes, whereby the population of the labouring classes is not only disproportionately augmented, but each generation is involved in accumulative difficulties, in order to provide for the next. And if to any one general cause more than another, the disasters of society in the mass are related, it is to the improvident habits of living and trading; whereby the ordinary fluctuations of human circumstances are made to tell so severely and extensively upon families, and individuals; and to which errors there is no greater nor more powerful seducement

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than that of the pride of appearances. And it is a known fact, that wherever you find the people most outrageous against the government, there you find the same people the most intemperate, idle, and profligate. It is in the most vicious and disorderly parts of our towns, where we find the dram shops and seducements to vice and low turbulent politics most abundant and emblazoned; and it is there also we see the greatest wretchedness, as the necessary concomitant of the former.

If in any age we find, historically, that the people were happier than in another, we at the same time find less *vice* either in the people themselves, in their rulers, or in both; for all that we have said respecting private vices, operates even more extensively and prejudicially when developed in the governors of empires, and the directing spirits of the age! And hence it becomes a matter of astonishment, that under representative governments, almost the only feature in the characters of the candidates for office, which are left unscanned by the people, are those of their *moral* and *religious* principles, without which, no guarantee have the electors, for the political integrity of the representatives whom they elect. But when we find the same high characteristics wanting in the popular masses, the wonder ceases; and it is only because there is more honour, virtue, and excellence, existing in the majority of their senators than among themselves, that they are not made more the tools and victims of authority and faction than they are.

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A virtuous people would elect and tolerate none but virtuous representatives; and the latter would, in conformity with their integrity, consult only the public weal, and desire only the approbation of a virtuous nation, as they would deserve its countenance and support instead of the frowns and rebellion of disaffected and reckless multitudes!

It may, therefore, be fairly esteemed a national question, by what means this great end can be accelerated. It is generally held that it is dangerous for a government, a succession of men of possibly very *opposite* principles, to take into their own hands the shaping of the popular mind. Also, that legislators are not to compel, but encourage people to be religious. And yet the government is the *pivot* upon which all great national schemes are most easily poised and turned. Still, conscious of the weight of the objection to the direct interference of legislation, in concerns affecting the consciences and opinions of mankind in a free state, it might, perhaps, be preferable, on the whole, to leave the details of Christian instruction and regulation to such individuals as might offer their services; and for government, upon their representation to a committee of Parliament appointed for purposes of *national education*, to grant them, through some accredited local agent who might personally become acquainted with the characters and principles of the candidates, and superintend the application of the grants, such sums of money as might enable them to effect their plans of religious instruction. This

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is merely intended as a passing suggestion, to reconcile the idea of a national system of Christian instruction, with the freedom of conscience, the act of toleration and distinction of classes. The progress of what is termed political knowledge, combined with impure principles, cannot now be arrested, even if it were thought to be desirable. It is a moral power of indefinite application, and can only be rationally controlled and directed by another and a moral power of *higher* influence, inspiring definite motives and purer purposes.

The tendency of general knowledge to awaken without rationalizing the popular mind has been already adverted to. The mass of the people conceive that their grievances are *political*, and, therefore, they cast entire odium upon their political directors. Strangers to discretion, they mistake effects for causes, and means for ends; and hurry onward in a career of revolution, of which we need not be entirely incredulous, because we have in our own generation witnessed full many a confirmation of the adequacy of the cause of them, whether in the fatuity of rulers, or the infatuation of their subjects.

In less than three months three reigning princes, those of France, the Netherlands, and Brunswick, were driven from their thrones, shall we say by the expression of popular opinion; or, amid the clangour of arms, may we not rather recognise the triumph of *terror*, than the force of a general persuasion? Yet it arose from, and was seconded by,

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the wayward spirit of improving times; active in discerning the abuses of governments; and rash in the remedy it prescribes. Greece has rallied in the cause of independence; and in America the same spirit of freedom has severed the colonies of Spain from the mother country. It is vain to attempt to check the progress of events—the experience of successive generations carries with it it's own lessons, and it is wiser to anticipate them than to be taken by surprise. Thus may all governments in their turn, even that justly admired constitution which Tully predicted, and foreigners praised, and we ourselves, for a thousand years, have boasted of as the most stable and excellent to answer all the ends of a civil community, be shaken by the blast of ill-directed popular opinion, and become, like those of Athens and Lacedemon, the mere jargon of schoolmen, and the topic of the antiquary and the historian!

The Gaul has, indeed, set up *another* monarch since he deposed the last—and so did the *Frogs.* And we have more than once seen prince and nobles swept away; yet who will say that what is popularly miscalled most natural, is either most rational or calculated to answer the purposes of human nature? Some object to a *king;* for, say they, "he cannot have our interests at heart as our deputed representatives would have; and as for *peers,* they were never meant to look to any but their own business. A republic is devoid of all superfluity." The king is deposed, the peerage

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abolished, and the people now struggle in mutual opposition about their representatives. At length the deputies are elected. "There is absolute rottenness in human nature," say the people; "our interests are as little forwarded as before. Let us try a *new* representation—let us try a *democracy*—let us try something else!" It is all the same; human nature is fallible; and in time, party and family interests spring up even in their boasted republic; and the people, amid the quaking framework of society, look back into history, as they may yet remorsefully have to do, and dwell upon the glories of even *monarchy* itself, or the triple constitution of old England; and those, say they, "were the happy times!" "Let the days of the Grecian states, and an English heptarchy return! Let us divide ourselves into several minor commonwealths, and then we shall be better able to look after our separate interests, and in so doing consult that of each other. Nay, but let *America* be our model!" Nay! who shall presume to predict what changes may yet transpire among the empires of the earth! who shall say what of all that is excellent will stand, whilst the omniscient Creator and Disposer of all things is himself prostrated in the hearts of his creatures!

"We look," writes Chalmers, "for our coming deliverance in a moral change, and not in any, or in all, of those economic changes put together, which form the great *panacea* of so many of our statesmen.—And we repeat that a thorough educa-

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tion, in both the common and Christian sense of the term, forms the only solid basis, on which either the political or economic well-being of the nation can be laid."

"There can be no health," says Southey, "no soundness in the State, till government shall regard the moral improvement of the people, as its first great duty. The same remedy is required for the rich and for the poor. Religion ought to be so blended with the whole course of instruction, that its doctrines and precepts should, indeed, 'drop as the rain, and distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.' We are, in a great degree, what our institutions make us."

When the Almighty "cometh forth to execute judgment upon a sinful land and people, he is at no loss for the choice of instruments to fulfil his pleasure. All their armies, their wealth, their wisdom, or their *reforms*, are of little avail if not founded in truth and justice. Apart even from the judgments of God, there is a direct tendency in *immorality* to ruin a country, however prosperous,—nor, can national welfare long survive the death of morals, or the decline of religion in a State.

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CHAPTER V.

THE PEOPLE BECOME THEIR SELF-TORMENTORS.

HAD the great Roman satirist lived in a reforming age, when all the conflicting passions raged uncontrolled, even by the superior light of Christianity, and abstracted the discreet pastor and sober citizen from the performance of their relative duties, until they both became lost in the maze of utopian visions of popular felicity and prosperity; where would the ire of his sarcastic genius have found its limit? Assuredly, not within the compass of a "*little book.*"

Having assumed that the efforts of all true patriots should be directed to the production of a national reformation of men and manners, as necessary for the improvement and preservation of our social edifice, how is this desideratum to be obtained? It is fully evident that human nature is not to be reformed by an Act of Parliament; and that extension of privileges without adequate se-

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curities, will increase the opportunities for doing evil; for, alas! the page of history shows, that pride, ambition, corruption, and folly, have been the natural attendants on man in every age!

The many-watered spring with which rulers have to contend in this age of change is *popular opinion.* It is a torrent that cannot be stemmed; but whilst it may be directed and led into proper channels, it is the wisdom and duty of the rulers of empires to provide for the right conduct of the popular mind, and to shape their legislation suitably to the current of the national intelligence. Resist it or dam it inconsiderately up, and at one swell it may endanger the entire fabric of the society. Hence the advantage of constitutional government.

In an age of ignorance, the people were as loyal to King Log as they now are to the man of their own choice. It was not until they leaped upon him, and experimentally discovered of what materials he was composed, that they altered their minds upon the subject of the "divine rights of kings." It was not until they knew something of what the world had been and had become, that they thought upon their "relative rights and duties, and prying into the laws of nature itself, at once set at defiance the dogmas of theorizing scholiasts, and the arbitrary mandates of usurping despots." But, whatever may be the faults of rulers, their subjects are often equally faulty in the means they take to correct them. Captivated by the charms of reason in the abstract, they have made *gods* of their own ideas,

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the objects of which have in the practical argument of their own experiments, as by a *lusus naturæ*, entirely disappeared. Sometimes they devise utopian views of human happiness, which they are even never agreed how to attain. Sometimes they contrive a scheme of government which it is only possible soon to accomplish by a national revolution; and which a counter-revolution as soon sweeps away. At other times we see them endeavouring to intimidate the existing legislature by insurrection and tumult—now expressing their discontent by an *active*, and now by a *passive* resistance.

It is plainly seen that open rebellion is accompanied with the destruction of all rights, property, and life; and it is equally clear that a passive resistance, more or less according to its extent, suspends the existing laws from being executed, and, consequently, superseding all civil rule and order, disorganizes the social community, and tends equally with the former to anarchy and misery.

But people often suppose that whatever thwarts their personal convenience, or opinions, must of necessity be wrong, and that they can never be wrong in the means they use for redress—hence those frequent popular tumults and breaches of law, which occur amongst the working classes of the community. It is then that the *civil* powers are necessitated to put forth their energies. The laws of society must be maintained—the conduct of a civil community must be systematic—bad laws and any system are better than none.

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To promise much, although they are conscious they can perform little, is the common resort of all parties in pursuit of popularity. But a discerning people soon discover the cheat; and when they recollect how much was promised, and see how little is performed, they attribute it not to previous miscalculation, but to the deception and corruption of office; and where they would otherwise have been content with little because little was needed, being now deceived by the promise of much, they demand infinitely more, and you shall not retract. Then comes the state lottery of revolution, where, whilst most may calculate upon certain loss, some, who have little to lose, expect to gain prodigiously. Some arch political adventurer, or modern Frog, now arises, and the following is his harangue:—

"Oh! people, who sue for plenty, liberty, and prosperity, know ye not that it is in *my* power to obtain for ye whatever ye want? Make me your legislator, and I will give ye laws, life, and liberty! Ye now have rulers, who, exhausting your substance by their odious imposts, give you nothing in return. Submit yourselves to me, oh, people! and I will prefer your offerings to the god of *reason* and *right*, which I will set up upon this plain; and ye shall fall down before it, and rise again as free as the light; and though stripped of all other things, yet rich in this glorious consolation, that ye have sacrificed them all for justice and equality!" Oh, people! deluded and denuded, what can your deity do for ye in return? What is your *guarantee* for

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the sacrifice ye must make? Ye have hearkened to that high priest in politics—ye may do as he enjoins—but can *he* perform his promises? Will ye not rather consider the impolicy of bartering all your present comforts and even small advantages for the unsubstantial shadow of promises and possibilities?

Unnecessary changes, or such laws as are not decidedly for the better, are worse than if no alteration had been attempted; for they unsettle the established usages of the country, and break in upon what had become the habitual, and, therefore, almost natural system of society. If a perfect political system be essential to human happiness, we may well despair of ever becoming happy; but that some of us are happy without it, makes us question the supposition. Many of the most unaccountable usages and laws have answered the purposes of society, as well as the most rational and intelligible; so that any extensive innovation, merely for the purpose of vulgar or fancied propriety, seems hardly worth a serious sacrifice.

Of all the absurd and even monstrous anomalies in the history of mankind, perhaps none surpasses the hatred and animosities to which a difference in opinion frequently gives rise. Although it is natural for men to differ in opinion about the self-same thing, and even whilst it is admitted that it is impossible to make all men think alike, yet we continually see men give way to the most ridiculous freaks of passion, merely because they meet with

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others who presume to think otherwise than they do. They submit all their politics to the vote of acclamation, or the more pointed argument of the pike. They affect, indeed, to appeal to opinion—but, alas! it is to their own! "May all those," say they, "who differ from us in opinion and sentiment, have neither bread to eat, nor water to drink! May their houses become sepulchres, and their shops be deserted, until their goods and merchandise perish for lack of buyers; or until they change their minds, and think as we do!" Liberal people! extolling liberty of conscience with the same breath that thus consigns it to ruin and execration! Are you *alone* to enjoy this liberty of forming and expressing your dogmas and opinions! Is this liberty? You complain of tyranny; and you are, indeed, the tyrants!

It matters not whether these deluded mortals, or other men, be in the right as to their abstract notions; but surely they pursue a wrong method, whether to inculcate their own opinions, or to turn them to their own advantage. Persecution produces a recoil; and in the midst of the storm, opinion is mistaken for their evil genius. The war of opinions is dreadful with the deluded and ignorant—the motive of one is as strong as that of another—none are open to conviction—each thinks he is right—each hopes to succeed. Who has seen the corn rotting in the fields, because there was no arm to gather it? and the village, where once were beheld beauty, order, and cleanliness in the gardens

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and the street, and health and cheerfulness in the countenances of the inhabitants; that village overgrown with weeds, desolate, ruinous, and forlorn, save the small remnant which seems only left to tell the doleful tale, and bear witness to others how short and sad is the transition from contentment and happiness, to discontent, turbulence, and misery! Such are the scenes that sometimes occur in our own manufacturing and mining districts. Are wages, or is something else, the occasion of discontent? Whatever it be, the classes concerned, instead of *deliberating* how to attain the object they may have in view without injury to the existing welfare of others or themselves, too often rush recklessly forwards to catch at what may, indeed, prove to be but the shadow of their falling fortunes.

The sequestered vale, the blissful retreat of many a humble, contented family, might sometimes appear to realize those fairy spots, and luxuriant isles, where the inhabitants, exempt from the cares of the world, pass their happy lives in the fragrant atmosphere of flowery and fertile fields, reaping the spontaneous produce of the soil, and rejoicing in the felicity of a happy nature. The innocent self-complacency of many a little child weaving its chaplets of flowers, and carolling in the sunshine, might justify the envy of many a crowned prince: "Ah! these are crowns that make the wearers happy!" Oh! ye Arabian shepherds! ye natives of Shiraz and Shadcam! What a contrast to these, is the scene where the frantic multitude tear up the

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green corn, or consume the little stock of their industrious neighbours with the fires of faction and discontent! Whatever their real privations may be, it is clear, that destroying the very means of subsistence cannot, by any possibility, better their own condition. They cannot endure the contrast between their poverty, and their neighbour's fancied abundance. Their cry is for a political reformation; while their case in reality requires a moral regeneration. No law, no Act of Parliament, can make the discontented happy; the drunkard sober; the idle industrious; the profligate righteous; and surely those excesses proceed more from the vice and delusion of the perpetrators, than from any distinct notion they entertain of thereby ameliorating their condition. How many a family are the victims of drunkenness, profligacy, and improvidence! How many thousands are harassed by the mere fluctuations and competition in trade! How few can be pointed out as really suffering from legislative oppression in this country!

The state of human circumstances is ever fluctuating; and changes in trade, and in the value of property, and consequently in the employment of a variety of classes of labourers, are the occasion of discontent and outrages that will probably not endure longer than the state of things that is the proximate cause of them. And, besides all this, there is an overweening rapacity in trade prevalent amongst all classes; which, setting at defiance the laws of honour and honesty, seem to have no other

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object than the avaricious gains of inordinate wealth, and which propensity preys like a malignant fever or cancer upon the vitals of society. Hence those speculations, in which, of late years, so many of our merchants and tradesmen have heedlessly embarked, perverting the regular current of commerce, and introducing illegitimate sources of wealth, which sooner or later must inevitably be exhausted, and for a time stagnate certain other branches of business, and throw numbers of individuals into temporary embarrassment and distress. They make their credit, instead of their means, the limit of their folly. This is not totally a matter of political economy; for it has a good deal to do with the *ethics* of the human conduct, inasmuch as when men run mad after money-making, their moral sensibilities become paralysed, and a feverish excitement of self-interest and peculation absorbs the attention, and engrosses all the energies of society.

A few years ago, in some parts of this country, the gunsmiths used to boast of the improvement which had taken place in the sale of their goods, during what was called the time of *radicalism*. There was scarcely a poor body in all the country side, who, according to his ability, did not arm himself with an old musket, pistol, or pike, against what the old women termed, "the levelling day;" for, poor deluded creatures, they actually believed that the day of retribution to the great and wealthy, and equalization of all privileges and property, was not only at hand, but fixed and determined. So per-

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suasive was the delusive sophistry of their ignorant and mischievous orators, forgetting that the industrious and frugal man will always possess more wealth than the idle and improvident—the ingenious man ever have more of the resources of life at his command, than the idiot or blockhead; and the strong man naturally some advantages over the feeble.

Behold the motley Hibernian multitude, armed with pikes and sticks, and all the usual insignia of murder and revolt, concentrating their forces with their champion, upon the plains of political strife! The *legitimate* object of popular assemblies is to canvass and disseminate opinions—but generally the people there will not hear those who differ from them—they appeal to reason, and yet set her at defiance; and too often, what they cannot effect rationally, they are urged to accomplish arbitrarily and by force of arms. Such are those monkey mootings where the god of *error* not of *truth* prepossesses the popular mind. If there be so many minds who differ from us in opinion that it should render the adoption of our views just now difficult or impracticable, why should we murmur, much less appeal to violence? An opinion can only become general by its dissemination. Persons of one way of thinking, if united and morally firm in supporting and diffusing their opinions, may expect that if they be in accordance with truth, justice, and the public welfare, they will ultimately become all-prevailing. Oh! deluded people, seek ye discre-

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tion which, according to Bacon, is true knowledge; you will then have few, if any, enemies left—the triumph and the bloodless trophies will be your's—ye cannot hasten that day otherwise than by *moral* means—ye may have *repeal*, and revolution too after revolution—ye may slay, break in pieces, and pull down, and still the new structure will be of party patch-work, and it will again fall, or be broken in pieces, like the potter's vessel, and ye will only multiply the miseries you expected to have annulled. Be contented, do your duty in your respective stations, and let the increasing intelligence and virtue of an opinionative community do its sure work in a legitimate way, although that way may have a thousand turns.

"But, ah!" some squalid parent may say, "it is easy for you who possess all your heart's desire, to reason with us thus—if we ask for bread, you may as well give us a stone. Can we forget the cravings of nature? Can a mother forget her sucking child? Can we be greatly censurable if, when from our low and wretched state we look up and behold the lavish profusion of the sons of plenty, when with their splendid equipages they flit from delight to delight, and contrasting our respective conditions, we call upon our rulers to consider our necessities, and if there be no other relief, at least to relieve us out of the *superfluities* of others?"

"Next to the salvation of their souls," says Chalmers, "one of our fondest aspirations in behalf of the general peasantry is, that they shall be admitted to a larger share of this world's

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abundance, than now falls to their lot. But we feel assured that there is no fair method by which this can be wrested from the hands of the wealthier classes. It can only be *won* from them by the insensible growth of their own virtue. The triumph will be a glorious, but, to be effectual and enduring, it must be a pacific one; achieved, not on the field of blood, or amid the uproar of furious and discordant politics."

But there is also another and a speedier remedy which might suggest itself to us upon an inquiry into the actual occasion of this lamentable distress. Is there no other remedy for the idle than to caress them? For the drunkards than to give them strong drink? For the profligate than to lead them into temptation? We would rather repeat, that inasmuch as individual vices are the actual occasion of a large proportion of the wretchedness and misery which daily present themselves at the gates of mercy and charity, the only *radical* and efficient relief which can be held out to such beings, is that of a reform in their own depraved habits. If this be a cheerless, as we fear it is a hopeless prospect, then all that can be added is, that charity in adopting such children, only prolongs to them an existence which is a burthen to themselves and a much greater burthen to the community.

And for suffering virtue amid miseries of not her own making, and for casual calamity, we perceive another, and in some degree self correcting, yet vicious cause in the overtrading and avaricious

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spirit predominant in the middle classes of society, and the inconsiderateness, profligacy, and grasping disposition of many of the higher ranks. Not that these qualities are peculiar, but that they prevail; and are not to be lost sight of, in estimating the causes of popular distress. But no, say the reckless and factious leaders of multitudes—the vices and errors of our rulers are sufficient to account for all our woes; and by whatever means the present state of the government be changed, that change must be for the *better!* Can any thing be less fair, or more ridiculous, or more headstrong, than this spirit of recrimination and revolution. If we inculcate Christian rights, liberty, and justice, we would also commend the Christian spirit and temper, which is of more importance than any single moral sentiment, because it pervades the whole character of man, and affects every action of his life—without this spirit, his wisest and best actions will be often neutralized, or even turned to bad account. Education has given activity to the popular mind; and the busy whirl of increasing commerce and trade has had its share in this work, but it is an activity as capable of being swayed by evil as good motives; and if the former transcend the latter in influence, we may behold much ill done where nothing but good was intended. The people without influential Christianity, are without a pilot—let them beware how they venture beyond the peaceful haven of a contented breast. "Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." We are all agreed that

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prosperity and happiness are desirable in themselves; but if we consult individuals, and not the oracles of truth, we shall find opinions many and various, both as to their nature, and how they are to be attained. *Moral* and not *material* power must ultimately gain the day.

It is alone the existing mass of intelligence and religion in these realms which keeps us in being as a great people; yet these influences are so limited in comparison with the principles of vice and folly, that they cannot altogether allay the immense ferment and turmoil that are constantly occurring—they can only check and partially counteract their tendency. The tumult proceeding from a mere difference of opinions is inoffensive, and in some degree useful—it keeps up a spirit of argument, and excites the languishing intelligence. But it is not when vice and folly meet together, and embrace each other, that we are to expect a greeting to truth. There we shall see in the room of argument the pistol and bludgeon—in the place of love, hatred—in that of truth, error and falsehood; and while the factious demand liberties and rights for themselves, they deal death and destruction to others.

Public meetings, it has been said, are the safety valves of the community. In uncivilized nations, cunning performs the part of what is termed finesse in civilized states. Under despotic governments, the people are constrained to be cautious as to what subjects they converse upon, and in the ex-

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pression of their sentiments; and this begets reserve. Reserve, whether voluntary or imposed, is always the occasion of suspicion and a want of confidence. Between individuals, it occasions misunderstandings and the breach of friendship—between states, it is frequently the cause of wars and rumours of wars —and between the people and their rulers, it begets mutual distrust, so that popular opinion perhaps only vents itself in crude devices, or in assassinations, plots, and revolutions, if it vents itself at all. But where the people meet publicly to declare their sentiments, all classes at least understand each other, however they may differ. Hence, popular assemblies are at any rate the indices of the popular mind, and the pulse of the national constitution—they are the *rostra* of the nation, from which the popular mind is delivered; though they are too often made the judgment thrones of denunciations as illogical as illiberal. As we have deduced before, so we repeat, it is too common for people, to attribute all their misfortunes to the system of government, or the laws of the State, instead of tracing them to their own vices, or to the vacillation of human circumstances. The human mind is too liable to be swayed by certain violent impulses of envy, jealousy, and desperation. Modern philosophers talk of reducing all men to a sense of justice and reason—but, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." The libertine and liberator have

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shaken hands, and they are sorry legislators indeed!

We all know how possible it is for the mind to dwell upon a subject purely ideal, until we almost fancy it a reality. So is it with many of our popular politicians—they cogitate and scheme about forms of government and utopian felicity, until they seem to be persuaded, that they alone, of all other people in the world, are capable of making all things as they would have them to be. With this persuasion, they begin to harangue the mixed and open-mouthed multitude, and dwell and descant upon the errors of rulers and corruptions of the State, until the people begin to think that they who can thus so wisely detect so many gross abuses, must needs know also how to rectify them—this, the crafty croaking orators fail not to turn to *account;* and accordingly insist upon a detail of measures, which if adopted, would prove a *sovereign* remedy for all their complaints. The ministry of the day is represented as unfaithful to the cause of the people; and every placeman, as a plunderer of the public purse. They know that the mass of the people do not properly understand politics, and they artfully avoid addressing themselves to judgment and knowledge, and chiefly appeal to the passions and prejudices of their poorer countrymen. These flaming orators mislead the people; and the former themselves. It is to be apprehended that, like the Frogs of old, they are often either too sanguine, or too regardless of consequences. And it not un-

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frequently happens, that if one of a party should be himself instated in office, he becomes on that very account an object of jealousy and suspicion, even with his former friends and associates, and if by chance he fail the people's expectations in one point, he is declared guilty of all apostacy. They take no account of the difficulties of office, and the influence of co-operating or counteracting councils. Indeed, to such an extreme does this absurd state of discontent proceed, that one is forced to the conclusion, that such people would not be satisfied with any government whatever, even the inoffensive one of King Log.

Good government does not altogether depend upon any particular form of government, democratic, electoral, aristocratic, republican, or monarchical; but first and chiefly, upon popular virtue and intelligence, which ensure order and confidence in the popular character, and command respect from the legislature—then secondly, and almost the necessary consequence of the first, there must be useful laws, and a mutual solicitude between government and subjects to see them carried into execution. But a vicious people force upon themselves bad laws, and frustrate the operation of good ones. Government is the *means;* and the *end* is popular happiness. We must not confound ends with means.

An absolute monarch administering wise laws, is as deserving of popular admiration, as any other form of government. If he were to play the

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tyrant towards an intelligent community, public opinion would presently be sufficient to neuteralize his will. A provisional government might at once supersede his authority. Any form of government that permits of popular influence in framing and executing its laws is certainly preferable to the former, inasmuch as it is less controlled by individual passions and imbecilities, and less exposed to arbitrary conduct on its own part, and sudden and violent reactions on the part of the people. And seeing how self-interest and pride predominates in human nature, and that, therefore, rulers may naturally prefer their own interests to those of their subjects; the people ought to look after their own rights, or they must frequently be disregarded; and every government is theoretically, although it may not be practically defective, that allows not of this influence. That government cannot long endure, which is opposed to an intelligent and virtuous people; but that which co-operates with them for the general weal of the community, ensures its greatest stability. Yet it cannot be overlooked that in the present state of society, party interests and popular vices and follies are so prevalent, that even the best governments may necessarily encounter many obstacles both amongst their own members, and those of the community at large.

When we refer to the influence of popular opinion, it is not be forgotten how it is constituted. The mass of the people are destitute of that information, and unhabituated to that ratiocination which

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are requisite to form a sound judgment upon the details of legislation. We know that they profess to hold opinions upon such matters; but, at the same time, we are conscious that they cannot be, and, in fact, are not the result of any reasoning of their own, but that they are, in short, the adopted opinions of other men. They are generally opinions and sentiments that flatter them with the attainment of something that they desire, and which they, therefore, readily adopt and support. Thus what is denominated popular opinion, is in reality the actual conviction of but a small part of the community, who, by persuasion and personal influence, induce multitudes to rally around them, ready, if required, to expend all their passions and powers in support of the opinion of perhaps one man, to whom, whilst they are extolling *liberty* and *equality*, they are probably, in a moral sense, the veriest tools and slaves. He then constitutes them into unions and confederacies, and so has his "quiver full of them"—he organizes an opposition to the rest of the community, and musters passion and vice, clamour and violence, instead of reason and virtue, to effect *his* laudable intentions of reformation and right. It may be said, that the like resource is open to all; yet we must certainly take account of human frailty, and consider how much more likely people in general are to hearken to that man who flatters their vain propensities and prejudices, than to him who appeals solely to their hearts as Christians, and to their judgments

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as reasonable beings. It is thus that the worst of men frequently prevail; and it is thus that the purposes of even the best intentioned are perverted in their import by the people. The following extract from Hooker's graphic description of the way by which the Puritan ministers gained upon the people, in derogation of the ecclesiastical government, may perhaps further elucidate the influence of popular leaders:—"The method of winning people's affection unto a general liking of the cause, hath been this; first, in the hearing of the multitude, the faults, especially of higher callings, are ripped up with marvellous exceeding severity, and sharpness of reproof; which being oftentimes done, begetteth a great good opinion of integrity, zeal, and holiness, to such constant reprovers of sin, as by likelihood would never be so much offended at that which is evil, unless themselves were singularly good. The next thing hereunto is, to impute all faults and corruptions, wherewith the world aboundeth, unto the kind of government established. Wherein, as before by reproving faults, they purchased unto themselves with the multitude, a name to be virtuous; so by finding out this kind of cause, they obtain to be judged wise above others—whereas in truth unto the form even of Jewish government, which the Lord himself (they all confess) did establish, with like show of reason, they might impute those faults which the prophets condemn in the governors of that commonwealth, as to the English kind of

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regimen, the stains and blemishes found in our state; which, springing from the root of human frailty and corruption, not only are, but have been always more or less, yea, and (for anything we know to the contrary) will be till the world's end, complained of, what form of government soever take place. Having got thus much sway in the hearts of men, a third step is to propose their own form of government, as the only sovereign remedy of all evils; and to adorn it with all the glorious titles that may be. And the nature, as of men that have sick bodies, so likewise of the people in the crazedness of their minds, possest with dislike and discontentment at things present, is to imagine, that any thing (the virtue whereof they hear commended) would help them; but that most, which they least have tried. The fourth degree of inducement is, by fashioning the very notions and conceits of men's minds in such sort, that when they read the Scripture, they may think that every thing soundeth towards the advancement of that discipline, and to the utter disgrace of the contrary. Pythagoras, by bringing up his scholars in the speculative knowledge of numbers, made their conceits therein so strong, that when they came to the contemplation of things natural, they imagined that in every particular thing they even beheld as it were with their eyes, how the elements of number gave essence and being to the works of nature; a thing in reason impossible, which notwithstanding, through their misfashioned precon-

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ceit, appeared unto them no less certain than if nature had written it in the very foreheads of all the creatures of God." After enlarging upon points of his argument, irrelevant to the present subject, he concludes it with a recapitulation of its principal heads; of which the three first continue thus:—"These are the paths wherein ye have walked, that are of the ordinary sort of men; these are the very steps ye have trodden, and the manifest degrees, whereby ye are of your guides and directors trained up in that school—a custom of inuring your ears with reproof of faults, especially in your governors; an use to attribute those faults to the kind of regimen, under which ye live; boldness in warranting the force of their discipline, for the cure of all such evils." All these remarks are applied by Hooker to *ecclesiastical* government; but by the simple omission of a word, it is an admirable moral sketch of the present times, and of human nature at all times.

However servile a man may be regarded as being, who suffers himself to be led by the dictation of others in matters of opinion; yet it is natural for him, under certain circumstances of ignorance or indifference, to rely upon the word of some known character, accredited for competency in talent and acquirements. This must always be the case more or less—in the ordinary and more trivial affairs of life, it is convenient to do so; but in matters of religion, or where the happiness of others is involved, it is a different

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thing. "Knowing is seeing," says Locke, "and if it be so, it is madness to persuade ourselves that we do so by another man's eyes, let him use never so many words to tell us, that what he asserts is very visible. Till we ourselves see it with our own eyes, and perceive it by our own understandings, we are as much in the dark, and as void of knowledge as before, let us believe any learned author as much as we will. Euclid and Archimedes are allowed to be knowing, and to have demonstrated what they say; and yet whoever shall read over their writings without perceiving the connexion of their proofs, and seeing what they show, though he may understand all their words, yet he is not the more knowing—he may believe indeed, but does not know what they say."

But worse than all, is the appeal to arms in support of an opinion; as if that were to carry conviction to the inmost thoughts—a thing so irrational and violent, that scarcely any present abuse is not to be preferred to the disasters necessarily attending so desperate a resort. Of the subjects of Henry the Seventh, Hume remarks, that "they were tired with discord and intestine convulsions, and willing to submit to usurpations, and even to injuries, rather than plunge themselves anew into like miseries."

If there were more of the Christian spirit influencing the dispositions of men in general, we should have less turbulence and flagitious conduct

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even amongst people otherwise ignorant. If princes and legislators as well as their subjects, possessed more of that spirit, they would view their relation to each other with greater discrimination than they now usually do, and also more disinterestedly consult the public weal; and at the same time abstain from those desperate remedies, to which both parties too frequently resort upon differences that reason or timely experience can alone satisfactorily adjust. It is often the arrogant insolence and turbulence of the ignorant, that draws down the wrath of rulers; and as often that the despotic conduct of rulers, raises the indignation of the people.

The beasts of the field possess instincts, which control and direct all their actions as wisely and perfectly, as if they were under the immediate guidance of supreme wisdom—the wild ox is wiser than an infatuated people, for it acts instinctively in the best way for itself; but the latter, are envious of each other, discontented and impregnable to reason—all their delight seems to be in change and violence—in breaking, destroying, and pulling down. If a Solomon were upon the throne, his wisdom would scarcely be a guarantee to him, for their respect—they are wayward children, fond of toys, and if their own will be but gratified, right or wrong, they are better pleased than with the wisest councils of the wisest men. This is the nation of modern Frogs.

We have endeavoured to illustrate, that the

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opinions abetted by the ignorant, are generally either the result of selfish feelings, or of indefinite ideas imbibed from the opinions of others, whether right or wrong. Under these influences, they pertinaciously declaim against all opposition, and sear their consciences against every rational conviction, to which enlightened minds are ever open; and they endeavour to enforce by violence and physical power, those concessions, which truth and reason seek only to attain by a moral conviction. They reflect not that physical force is inadequate to establish dominion in the realms of thought; that on the contrary, it is the moral principle that rules every voluntary action of man, and effects every change which his ingenuity devises in the physical world; that although the many may, by dint of superior strength, reverse the political position of the few; yet, that the opinions of the few, when disseminated, may predominate in the hearts of the many. But whether the few or the many be right, it is not for the sword to decide. Let minds be free, and the means of instruction diffused, and then although opinions may vacillate in the unequal progress of individual knowledge, yet ultimately human happiness under the truth will prevail. Men being governed either by their own opinions, or those of others, the assimilating of information and instruction will assimilate these, together with the designs and actions of men in general. In an absolute government, a tyrant may long oppose the opinions of his subjects; but, in a

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representative government, the influence of public opinion, always at its post, is ultimately efficacious.

Hume, remarking upon the deposition of *Richard*, observes, that "all the circumstances of this event, compared to those which attended the late revolution in 1688, show the difference between a great and civilized nation, deliberately vindicating its established privileges, and a turbulent and barbarous aristocracy, plunging headlong from the extremes of one faction into those of another." The difference between a barbarous and civilized people is, that the former sacrifice every thing to faction, and gain what they can by precipitancy and tumult; whilst the latter, merging minor differences and faction, coalesce in a union of moral influence towards attaining the objects which they have in view.

It cannot be well assumed that the people of the *seventeenth* century, were, generally, either more civilized, or intelligent, than are those of the *nineteenth*. The truth is, that the nation was at that period distracted by factions, whose leaders were of the intelligent part of the community, and their superiority over the leaders of the former age appeared in their conduct of that great revolution, and the virtue and moral courage of William the Third, when, instead of sacrificing every thing to faction, they, with the prince at their head, merged all their factions in the common cause. Had they not been unanimous, they could not have coalesced; and had they not been united, their efforts might

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have proved abortive. The example of these leaders applies equally where the masses of the people are themselves intelligent. It shows the moral power of popular unanimity and co-operation in support of a good principle; whilst it at the same time demonstrates the necessity for such a *union*, in order to effect a great purpose consistently with the harmony and welfare of society in a free state.

Such was the distinction that characterized the revolution of 1688, as "glorious;"—"all faction was for a time laid asleep in England, and rival parties, forgetting their animosity, had secretly concurred in a design of resisting their unhappy and misguided sovereign." But, thought the unfortunate monarch, though all the civil and ecclesiastical orders of the kingdom be against me, I will appeal to the *military*, who will alone be sufficient to enforce universal obedience. A battalion was drawn out before the king, and were told either to enter into his majesty's views, or to lay down their arms. "James was surprised to find that, two captains and a few popish soldiers excepted, the whole battalion immediately embraced the latter part of the alternative." And to complete his agony, at last his own favourite daughter deserted him, then "when he found himself abandoned in his uttermost distress by a child, and a *virtuous* child, whom he had ever regarded with the most tender affection; 'God help me,' cried he, in the extremity of his agony, 'my own children have forsaken me!'"

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At length, "observing that the church, the nobility, the city, the country, all concurred in neglecting him, and leaving him to his own counsels, he submitted to his melancholy fate."

Perhaps there is no record in the history of the world of so great a unanimity amongst at least the intelligent parts of a great community upon such an important question. In all probability, a greater obstinacy on the part of the king, and an appeal to the loyalty of the lower orders, as adopted by the *Pretender* subsequently, might have occasioned a contest between a vacillating multitude and more determined parties, before the fate of their prince had been decided. However, the historian continues, "after this manner, the courage and abilities of the Prince of Orange, seconded by surprising fortune, had effected the deliverance of this island; and with very little effusion of blood, (for only one officer of the Dutch army and a few private soldiers fell, in an accidental skirmish,) had dethroned a great prince, supported by a formidable fleet and a numerous army." And, finally, after all this was over, although faction again appeared in settling the succession to the throne, yet "the perseverance of the lower House obliged the Lords to comply; and by the desertion of some peers to the whig party, the vote of the Commons, without any alteration, passed by a majority of fifteen in the upper House, and received the sanction of every part of the legislature which then subsisted."

So terminated that great moral revolution; a

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revolution, which, if one battle had been fought on English ground, could not have been so designated, for then force and terror would have, in some degree, participated in effecting the mighty change!

But what do faction and physical force effect? They accelerate a violent concussion between opposite parties; valuable citizens perish; property is destroyed; trade stagnated; the national character demoralized; improvements of all kinds are checked; and individual and accumulative miseries are heaped upon the people; and after all, the factions are only more disappointed than ever, when they discover that even their own favourite darling schemes are not calculated to effect the end they had in view; when they reflect with remorse, if they have any, upon the mischiefs they have done; and with disappointment and chagrin, upon what they have not been able to do. The hearts of the people are not changed, their opinions are unaltered, their prejudices confirmed; and so far from the national happiness and prosperity being secured, they have now their disturbed institutions and credit to re-establish, a great deal more in every way to do, and more losses to repair, than if they had awaited the gradual ameliorating result of a general moral conviction of the necessity for the proposed political change or innovation. The force of sound opinion is of gradual acquirement; but it must not be supposed only to commence at the moment that the measure is publicly contemplated—it may, even at its first annunciation, be found to sympathize with

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the feelings and thoughts of many individuals,—if useful it identifies itself by degrees with the circumstances of the society, grows with its growth, and strengthens with its strength. It can only change with the circumstances by which it is constituted. So that when society is ripe for what it proposes, it has but to be propounded to the nation at large, and the people and legislators simultaneously acquiesce.

It follows, also, that if many of the people are in a state of ignorance, and devoid of moral discipline, they may become discontented with existing circumstances, without acquiring any clear perception of others more desirable—they perceive not why they should any longer submit to laws which they repudiate—slaughter and havoc mark their way—and, at length, instead of finding themselves in the midst of all that is desirable, they find they are thrown amid its ruins. This may apply to an entire people in barbarous times; or only *partially*, as in the instance of popular tumults in a highly civilized community.

Now, as intelligent persons comprehend whatever is proposed to them, better than the ignorant and unlettered, it is a proof that a measure proposed to the nation is unnecessary, when the intelligent masses are indifferent to it. And a political change, effected solely by a moral conviction in the intelligent masses of the people, cannot produce mischief, inasmuch as they resort to no violent expedients in order to effect what the diffusion of useful opinion

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is sufficient to bring about, without shock to the national circumstances, and without any dangerous reaction, because it cannot occur unless the people are, comparatively *unanimous*, or at least, not opposed to it. It were better to sacrifice an opinion, than to support it by violence, which carries along with it no conviction; and although successful to-day, may prepare for a reaction to-morrow. It is only by the concurrent support of ideas that it acquires force. It is by the general prevalence of an enlightened opinion that nations may set at defiance the usurpations of tyranny—by this, a democracy may become harmonized in its councils—by this, under a republic and mixed government, popular representatives are elected—and by this, an actual revolution may be effected without anarchy, or the shedding of a drop of blood, which has already been shown by the return of Napoleon from Elba to France!

But how is this unanimity to be brought about? Surely not by popular ignorance; for an ignorant people, if they act at all, act without any distinct view of either means or ends. It must then be by the diffusion of really useful knowledge and intelligence, which will alone inform them what is for their common good, and by what means it is best to be attained. But, alas! we have also seen an intelligent people, divest themselves of every principle of religion and propriety, and swayed only by turbulent private interests, rush into every extreme of faction, fury, and folly. Therefore, besides the

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capacity for forming an opinion of the public welfare, we cannot ensure to ourselves either national prosperity or happiness, unless the people themselves also possess, individually, an internal principle of rectitude, constraining them to consult the good of each other, and to sacrifice private interest to public advantage. It is only with a religious and virtuous people, that popular opinion can have its due influence. The popular opinion and character are constituted of those of private individuals. If the latter be vicious, so must the former; and on the contrary, every *private virtue* is a public benefit, it adds to the honour of the possessor, and to the glory of the community of which he is individually a member. Then may he proudly exclaim with Virgil—

> " Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
> Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
> Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari !"

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CHAPTER VI.

FURTHER ACCOUNT OF THE FROGS AND THE PEOPLE.

THE Frogs asked for a king, and speedily they got one. But instead of being contented and happier when they had obtained what they wanted, the croaking nation were worse off than before. King Log was their derision; and the stork their destruction! Such results, however fatal, were not without their benefits to the race; for it taught them that the good which they sought, neither depended upon this nor the other *new system*, but upon their own dependence on the laws of nature; by reverting to which, they regained that felicity, which they then perceived, in changing that dependence, they had left behind.

Let us suppose that the dearest wishes of a party were gratified—that we had vote by *ballot*, universal suffrage, and annual Parliaments—that we received from "Heaven our manna, and our water from the rock;" yet suppose, that the precariousness of fortune, the fallacy of reason, and the vices of individuals, should continue the same as they now are

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—that nations and individuals should invidiously vie with each other—that self-interest and duplicity should still be the ruling motives of society—that idleness and profligacy should still characterize many; whilst many more are discontented and miserable they know not why—supposing such a state of things to have arrived, then we have a people possessing every thing which they demanded, and yet unfortunate and miserable; and inquiring—Wherefore?—the Frogs reply, that "it is because ye are unobservant of those divine laws which are presented to ye as the only means of securing permanent prosperity and felicity by the same Providence which implanted the instincts of nature in us."

Now it is not intended by any thing that has been advanced, nor by any thing that shall yet be urged, to canvass any particular political doctrine, into the details of which it would thereby become necessary to enter; but all that we here aim at is, to show how materially popular ignorance and vice tend to neutralize any system of political regimen, however soundly framed.

Let any form of government that can be conceived the most desirable, be for once conceded; still the fluctuations of trade and commerce would occasion individual and public calamities; the improvidence of individuals would still conduce to individual misfortunes; the vices of individuals, to misery; their ignorance, to error; their selfishness, to cupidity; their ambition, to usurpation; and

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their discontent, to clamorous complaint. The intricacy of the concerns of a great community would still present similar difficulties to the legislator; and difference of opinion would still be attended with jarring councils. It cannot be denied that all these causes concur in producing what are termed *popular hardships and distress.* Many of them are inherent to human circumstances; and many more to popular vices. Even *universal suffrage* could not guard against these, for it would but enlarge the sphere of their ruinous action. The man who accepts a bribe for his vote, does but sanction him who concedes his patronage for an office. And he who in the petty details of his own affairs sacrifices honour and justice on the altar of self-interest, is but an instance of what may be expected from the mass of men such as they now are, when the great concerns of the public weal are in question—"relieve me and my trade from this or that impost, and I care not on whom else it be charged—instal me in this or that office, and ye may put about the helm of affairs which way ye please."

It is sometimes remarked that the art of government is like any other science, which requires study and practice to render a legislator able and adept, and that, therefore, the less that those classes, who comprehend it not, have to do with it, the better. So far as the art itself is concerned, this sentiment is undoubtedly correct; but we must also allow some consideration to those who are concerned.

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Any other science is, perhaps, generally only a matter of interest to those engaged in it, whilst every civil government is an affair of immediate interest to every well-informed member of the community, and every individual is more or less affected by its uses and abuses. Yet it is equally a matter of public moment, as to who may and who may not safely interfere with the national concerns. It is evident that the unintelligent and ignorant are equally as incapable of judging of political as scientific merits and demerits; and that they will either become the tools of factions, or the inconsiderate abettors of measures they cannot appreciate. The exclusion of such minds, is obviously necessary to the due moral influence of the popular intelligence, without the charge of illiberality being applicable.

But it is manifest that even amongst those classes who are included in the popular intelligence, the popular errors and vices frequently bias and thwart their due influence just as much as popular ignorance, so that until a higher sense of individual duty in matters of public welfare, shall be made to sway over the sentiments and conduct of men in general, we possess no guarantee against evils as common as if the national intelligence had even much less to do with the public weal than it at present assumes.

We see that in the physical constitution of man, those functions which are essential to his existence, are wisely ordered *independently* of his control, on

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account of the inadequacy of his reason to superintend and direct their manifold and momentary offices. Here he is obliged by a fearful necessity to recognise his dependence upon the great Author of his being; but in his *moral* constitution, where he feels not immediately the fatal consequences of transgression, where he is admonished and not necessitated, he forgets or rejects those equally important laws, upon which his moral, political, and eternal welfare, as surely depend. He vainly appeals to his own wisdom and ingenuity to ascertain in a practical career of error and delusion, how far he can dispense with the interference of a higher power. Vainly, indeed, is he careful and troubled about many things, which, perhaps, after all, a mere non-interference would best have provided for. He puffs himself up with his bubbles, foibles, and factions, until, at length, like the proud Frog, he bursts indeed!

No delusion appears to have been commoner amongst the Frogs during the time of their anarchy, than their presumption. It is said of one of these bloated creatures, that having mounted upon the margin of his lake, he actually proclaimed to all the beasts of the forest, that he was an able physician, a great quack, that he could cure all sorts of disorders. It is not recorded whether any suffered bodily by his imposition; but it is certain that the discerning *Fox* met his pretensions with a well-timed rebuff. And great would be the service to society now-a-days, if we had but a few such discerning

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foxes here and there to oppose these uncandid practisers upon the public credulity, these impudent pretenders to perfection, who are the puffers in trade, and the agitators in politics, who sacrifice truth to the idols of their own cupidity and factions!

Every man naturally looks to his own interest; but whether in doing so, he is actuated by honourable and just, or dishonourable and unjust motives, makes all the difference. If by the former, even his failures are not discouraging; if by the latter, even his success is a misfortune.

When people are accustomed to prize liberty, in its fullest scope, as the happiest state of human existence; they are apt to think, that, therefore, the condition of the savage in the woods is the most enviable state of being. When they see that power and riches procure for their possessors honours, splendour, and luxury, they are then prone to fancy, that dominion and wealth are the highest, or perhaps only sources of personal and national felicity; but let them only consider the whole state of savage life, the deprivations, and dangers, and the mental tenebrity of its *Indian Sons*, and then let them say whether the indolent repose, or wild career of the Indian, are comparable to the active business, or the spiritual enjoyments and prospects of civilized society. Let them reflect on the cares, anxieties, disappointments, and unsatisfying foibles of the man who hunts after power, renown, and wealth, contrasted with the equanimity, vir-

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tues, and heavenly-mindedness of the humble Christian, who has but little and is contented therewith; and then let them conclude, whether either wealth or power are absolutely essential to individual or national felicity. The truth is, that means are too frequently regarded as ends. Liberty, is good so long as no one uses it to the detriment of another; and wealth and power are desirable so far as they are subservient to the well-being of society: but the former is bad when it conduces to anarchy and barbarism; and the latter are only prejudicial when they tend to oppression, and to engross the affections, and enslave the energies of the human mind.

It is not wealth itself that renders a people either the most felicitous or enduring. When an empire, however magnificent and wealthy, becomes avaricious, it also soon degenerates; and either, like some of the ancient states, becomes a prey to surrounding enemies, or the victim of luxurious habits and intestine disorders.

If we inquire into the origin of wealth, we shall find that it is constituted of the surplus produce of the industry of one or more individuals: its origin is, therefore, in itself legitimate; and the conveniences and comforts which it supplies, are also natural and desirable: but because they are desirable, the depravity of man has ever strived to invent new and illegitimate modes of attaining what they so much desire. Between individuals, theft and fraud are resorted to for this purpose. The

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common every-day tricks of trade, are nothing less than an illegitimate mode of money-making: but as a national concern, we may consider war, agriculture, and commerce, the three grand sources of wealth. The first of these, arising from the determined cupidity and avarice of man, is a violent and unnatural mode of aggrandizing the empire; the two latter, springing from necessity, are the natural resort of human beings to relieve their own and each other's wants; and whatever surplus, thus acquired, may remain, after satisfying present need, may justly be regarded as well-gotten, and, if properly applied, deemed useful riches.

Now supposing wealth to be legitimately obtained in the way of trade, and as the fruits of some species of industry, it still may be turned to purposes, which, so far from being either useful or beneficial, may frustrate its natural end, by promoting profligacy, ruinous expeditions and speculations, and every vicious habit, both in a people at large, and in individual cases—in the prince and rulers, and in their subjects. But this is no argument against the thing itself; this is the abuse of wealth, which improved intelligence and virtue in the people must correct. Its uses are seen and acknowledged in all our civil institutions, and the conveniences and improvements of flourishing times. The means of acquiring wealth in the natural course of every man's calling in civilized society, are in themselves equally as beneficial as the riches which they may acquire. Without the necessity

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imposed upon the many, for applying themselves to some such calling, some would be idle, and others busy in mischief; and the evils attendant upon either state, might be sufficiently calamitous. Commerce, in particular, is calculated to circulate information, associate nations, and provide for the wants as well as elegancies of life; affording, moreover, employment to a world, that might otherwise become listless, vicious, and debased. The immense wealth, the golden vessels, the precious treasures, the pictures, libraries, equipages, and diadems, which the Romans procured as the trophies of their victories, were undoubtedly sufficient to make them one of the greatest nations that ever existed; yet as the spoliation of other states was the source of their greatness and renown, when such resources failed, Rome declined, without the means of recovery:—Luxury crept in as a substitute for other occupations. Unless, as in China, almost every foot of territory be made productive, agriculture alone is insufficient for the support of an increasing population. The resources of commerce, like those of nature, are indefinite, because every country is, in a certain way, productive, and its population ingenious; so that as long as this be so, there will be something to exchange with foreigners, for commodities more useful and valuable to each community, than its own surplus productions. Neither in this way does one nation suffer by the advancement of another, but rather advances with it in civilization and happiness.

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If population, and the wants of that population, could always be retained at a certain point, then perhaps the people might in one sense be said to have been in a happier condition during those reigns of the Tudor dynasty, when the feudal system was least oppressive, and tended by the pride of the lords in providing for, and superintending the comforts of numerous retainers, to diffuse their wealth among the lower orders, who, every one with his farm and cottage, lived a contented and happy life. But as population advanced, it became necessary for people not thus provided for, to pursue those occupations, which, by their success, induced even the vassals of those lords, from simply peculative motives, to bring up their sons to them; so that when the lords found their very vassals beginning to vie with them in the acquisition of wealth, splendour, and power, they commenced a series of statutory resistance, which the former regarded as merely tyrannical hostility to their natural rights; and thus in a natural way, the conflicting passions of men brought about the abolition of the feudal system. The lords no longer provided for their tenantry; but required rent for their cottages and farms. Those who were not possessed of capital, could not carry on their farms, and, therefore, sought other occupations; whilst the farms became consolidated more and more in the hands of capitalists. Thus, a circumstance so much regretted by some, as that of the consolidation of farms, was but an event

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arising from the advancement of society; and so it still proceeds: those who think that they can do better in trade, selling their little freeholds; and others, forced to do so by excessive competition in every line of business; and individuals who have much spare capital, investing it in the purchase of land. Those results are certainly to be regretted, which arise from avaricious, improvident trading, and monopolizing speculations: yet the condition of the ancient feudal vassals, is no more desirable, than that of the domestic slaves of ancient or modern times. Man is a being endowed with moral and intellectual capacities; by the neglect or perversion of which, he either reduces himself to nearly a level with the brute creation, or assimilates himself to the demons of Pagan mythology; and on the other hand, all his prosperity and happiness depend upon the enlightened and virtuous culture and employment of those capacities.

When we turn our eyes upon a whole community, and observe all men in it concurring, or acquiescing in projects for promoting the national glory and renown, in schemes of conquest, in martial prowess, in an extensive commerce, in political influence, in wealth and grandeur, or more happily, in literary eminence and civic distinctions; we may then fairly presume that the popular motive is ambition, and the object national aggrandizement. Such are the passions that have generally swayed the destinies of ancient and modern empires. One country sets itself up as the rival of

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another;—what cannot be effected by violence, is perhaps attained by political plots, and legislative schemes; and tumult and war, fluctuations in trade, and national jealousies, characterize such a state of society. There can only be one legitimate motive, by which all the movements of society ought to be guided; that is, by a view towards promoting individual and general happiness. Though a people be *puissant*, so that the world should tremble at their very name; what happier are they for that? Such may gratify the vain ambition of a tyrant; but what happier are his subjects? And although they possessed hoards of treasure, sufficient to outshine all that have gone before them; yet if its use exceed the necessaries and elegancies of life, and degenerate into avarice, luxury, and vice, and all their long train of still degenerating evils, who shall say where the corruption may terminate!

The ambition to excel in science and literature, is necessarily confined to comparatively a few distinguished individuals, whose reputation is only nationally adopted, and not attainable by the people at large. We talk and read of Augustan ages, and illustrious times! There may be distinguished heroes, orators, bards and philosophers; but they are few in comparison to those without number, who possess neither opportunity nor talents for so excelling; and, without any superior influence, are only subservient to the passions of their own breasts.

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Nations have in different ages been influenced by an ambitious, a chivalrous, superstitious, and avaricious spirit. They have thriven until the bubble burst—until the downfal of a state; until the people's eyes were opened; or until the tide of commerce turned; and what reason have we to believe that it will not yet be so, where they, to any predominant degree, constitute the national energy.

And who are the men whom nations in general esteem great, and whom they extol for their peculiar talents in promoting the happiness and desired objects of the community. In general, although it be possible for a man of talent to excite wonder without admiration, whoever performs extraordinary exploits, whether of good or evil tendency, is set down for a great man, a personage to be envied and extolled, a character to be imitated. And such are the spirits of every age, who walk the earth, dictating to the nations, uttering their oracles and opinions, and captivating the multitude by the charms with which every thing they do or say is invested. The people in past ages were not different in this respect from ourselves. The characters of the warrior and statesman which they admired and held up to the admiration of futurity, we also hold up and admire. The works of their Homer, Aristotle, and Euclid, are seen side by side with those of our Milton, Bacon, and Newton. They pourtrayed the praises of their heroes upon the friezes of their temples; and we, in our ceno-

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taphs do the same. Such are the men whose busts and portraits are handed down to posterity; the invisible rulers, as it were, of the destinies of empires, and the directors of the thoughts and opinions of other men. Of how supreme importance then is it, that the influence of such characters should be directed to a beneficial end! How many of the leading spirits in every age are men who have but lent a helping hand to pervert the spirit of their times!

"We know nothing," says Channing, "so fitted to the advancement of society, as to bring its higher minds to bear upon the multitude; as to establish close connexions between the more and less gifted; as to spread far and wide the light which springs up in meditative, profound, and sublime understandings. It is the ordinance of God, and one of his most benevolent laws, that the human race should be carried forward by impulses which originate in a few minds, perhaps in an individual; and in this way the most interesting relations and dependencies of life are framed. When a great truth is to be revealed, it does not flash at once on the race, but dawns and brightens on a superior understanding, from which it is to emanate and illumine future ages. On the faithfulness of great minds to this awful function, the progress and happiness of men chiefly depend." But alas! how little can we depend upon the faithfulness of great minds to this important obligation! Public applause is what they too generally aspire after; and to this perverse end, must they echo the corrupt sentiments of the public

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breast; and thus, instead of the people imbibing the high tone of lofty genius, the latter takes the impress of the popular spirit.

And who is the friend of the people? Is it he who horrifies them with the picture of real or imagined woes, renders them discontented with the good they already possess, and goads them on headlong in the career of revolution and self-destruction? Or is not he the truer friend of the people, who obeying the sympathies of nature, and the dictates of a Christian philanthropy, does what he can by the due exertion of moral influence towards elevating the tone of the popular character, visits the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, mingles the sweet consolations of religion in the bitter cup of the poor of his neighbourhood, and by a personal intercourse with the lower orders of society, searches out the causes of individual distress, introduces into their families better systems of domestic economy, and removes the stern yoke of improvidence and vice, too commonly their most unrelenting masters! It is thus that the rich and the poor, the high and the low, are brought into friendly contact, and to feel a mutual interest in each other's welfare; and it is thus that the educated and the uneducated, the virtuous and the vicious, are led to an enlightening and ameliorating interchange of sentiment. It is thus that the extremes of society become united, and that social harmony is promoted. And it is thus one man becomes the fountain of a living principle of conduct to many

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others. Vice sits abashed when virtue enters her dwelling; and despair again looks up when charity takes her by the hand.

Our ancestors, as well as ourselves, have witnessed the sublime development of character, which Christianity in the monarch, the senator, the man of genius, and the philanthropist, is so eminently calculated to produce; but it is yet preserved for posterity to see what that influence shall actually be upon an entire people reared in the arms of virtue, and piety, whose hearts are as erect as their countenances towards heaven.

Now, in the language of Channing, "we have aimed to expose the passion for dominion, and desire of ruling mankind. We have laboured to show the superiority of moral power and influence over that sway which has, for ages, been seized with eager and bloody hands. We have laboured to hold up to unmeasured reprobation him who would establish an empire of brute force over rational beings. We have laboured to hold forth, as the enemy of his race, the man who in any way would fetter the human mind, and subject other wills to his own. In a word, we have desired to awaken others and ourselves to a just self-reverence, to the free use and expansion of our highest powers, and especially to that moral force, that energy of holy, virtuous, purpose, without which we are slaves amidst the freest institutions."

There is, perhaps, no passion which in all countries operates so influentially as the religious feeling

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peculiar to man; and it depends entirely upon the application of this principle, to a false or a true object, whether it shall work prejudicially or beneficially. A false religion renders vice inveterate—the true, makes virtue invincible!

Every known country possesses certain superstitious or religious traditions, which are blended and associated with their earliest, their strongest, and most influential sentiments and prejudices, so that they are even more tenacious of them, than, in numerous instances, of their very lives. To this passion, and not to its high object, the Pagans immolate their victims; the Mohammedans devastate with fire and sword; the Jews, in latter days, cherish the meagre relics of their once solemn rites; and the Enthusiast, in times of bigotry, kindles his faggots, and wields the weapons of persecution. Whatever expresses the feelings of fervent devotion; whatever treats of the supremacy of God; the glories of heaven; the beauties of religion; or the conduct and hopes of the faithful; excites emotions of the most powerful and sublime description, however false or true be the object of adoration—whether the mind clearly discerns its relation to that high object, or vaguely apprehends it.

But how is religion to introduce a new energy into society? The spirit of society is the active principle of its members—hitherto, we have had ambition, avarice, and in short, every human passion. But as intellectual culture matures; as rational worth comes to be the criterion of respec-

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tability and greatness, so must all adventitious qualities, the pride of rank and the pomp of wealth, proportionally decline, until they cease to possess any other merit than what their utility demands. We now want something of a broader principle than the former,—more permanent in its nature, more general in its application, and happier in its results. This is naturally the religious principle of man; but specifically, *Christianity*. It is this which teaches and influences men to act as in the open face of heaven, and in subserviency to the will of God; cultivating all their nobler faculties, with a view to his glory; and in all their conduct, consulting the good of each other, as well as their own. This would impart a candour and dignity to the human character, which nothing could surpass—it would propose a great object, worthy of all its powers to attain.

As avarice and ambition, by a gradual perversion and corruption, took the place of the spirit of religion in the monastic institutions of the first centuries of the Christian era; so is it a sign of a corrupt and perverted state of society, when the popular spirit is hostile to the peaceful, rational, unambitious and virtuous principles of Christianity!

And how happens it, that Christianity which has been so long professed, has been so little practised? We have been in possession of its precepts for upwards of eighteen centuries, and yet the conduct of men has, on the whole, been as little guided by them, as it was before they were ever promulgated.

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Yet it is not surprising that Christianity should have been to such a degree slighted; for although Clemens, Irenæus, Tertullian, and many other of the early ecclesiastical writers, expressly lay it down, for instance, that it was characteristically unlawful for a Christian to fight; and although the early Christians literally and rigidly inculcated and adhered to the doctrines of their faith; yet soon after Christianity became incorporated with statistics by Constantine, it was rather regarded as a bare watch-word in politics, than received or sanctioned as the oracle of divine truths. Rulers and subjects, under the papal influence, did little else than politically change the State religion from Paganism to the former; so that they could scarcely be expected fully to apprehend, much less to practise, its pure and spiritual commands. They professed Christianity; yet their actions, as to the great mass of the empire, were those of Pagans. Manso observes, that the three prominent features of that age were, "the extension of jurisprudence, improvement in rhetoric, and the blending of Christianity and heathenism." Subtle rulers could easily reconcile their conduct to the uninformed and superstitious vulgar; and the people, uninquiring, and trusting to the former, became in time habituated to annex wrong ideas to the Christian doctrines themselves; and war, as well as laxity of morals, continued as common under the new, as they had been under any former dispensation. The comparatively little bands of devoted Christians, who were so from

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principle, and not, like the rest of the empire, politically only, were alas! too glad of the protection which this change of affairs afforded them from their late persecutions, not to be acquiescently contented; and however their better judgments might militate against the doctrines of the times, they were too insignificant as a body, to be of any great avail in the community. Thus have received opinions and habits reduced Christianity to what it now is in Christian politics.

The natural prejudices of sectaries and parties, prevent the system of religious instruction being blended with the general education of youth at most public schools; but, if scruples cannot otherwise be overcome, why not each sect have its own schools and colleges as well as churches and chapels? If parents did their duty at home, in superintending the religious instruction of their children, this branch of public education would be less important; but too commonly, they cannot, or will not. Unless the truth be made to take the earliest possession of a child's mind, other adverse sentiments will soon make it their stronghold; and like imps of darkness, will afterwards set at defiance all that is good. The almost fruitless labours of our missionaries amongst adults, proves how difficult it is to shake the prejudices and scepticism, and to bring down the pride of matured minds, grown old in iniquity or error. The schools are the vineyards where the tender shoots of the youthful mind are trained naturally in the way they should go. Our gentry

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in early life, are too exclusively initiated into the Pagan mysteries of Greece and Rome, and too little into the principles of the religion of their fathers. The lower orders of society, for the most part, learn neither. The same remedy is required for both.

"They who are charmed," says Sir W. Jones, "with the Grecian orators and poets, will find the boasted δεινον of Demosthenes, the μεγαλοπρεπον of Thucydides, and all the σεμνον grace and power of rhetoric, imagery, elegance of style, and greatness of composition, in the best of the Greek writers, excelled by the prophets. It is impossible to conceive any thing more lively, exact, or beautiful, than are the allegories, the similitudes, the metaphors, the descriptions, the ornaments, (or, we may add, divine, than the sentiments, important than the truths, cheering than the promises, or awful than the threatenings,) so profusely interspersed and scattered every where in the Scriptures of the Old (and of the New) Testament. So that nothing can be more astonishing than that this book (the sacred volume) should be neglected by men, whose ancestors thought it glorious to give their bodies to be *burned* to purchase for posterity the liberty to read it; or that it should by any man be treated with less regard than is due to writings that have stood the test of so many ages."

It is neither wealth, nor knowledge, that of themselves render a people permanently prosperous, or

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happy; unless by cultivating a Christian spirit, as a governing principle, the people also possess an internal and supremely powerful motive, influencing their conduct in all the public and private relations of society. When such is our "wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations," then may they pronounce with truth, "surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

We have before seen, that there is a reciprocal influence between the character of the people and their rulers; that the misrule of the latter produces misconduct in the former; and that the vices of subjects frequently occasion tyranny on the part of their prince, and always misery amongst themselves. We have also attempted to explain how these results are brought to pass—how the indifference and stupidity of the people in barbarous countries suffer them to endure the contempt and despotism of their governors without murmur or question; how, in civilized states, the reckless ignorance of some leads them to dissipate and pervert their best means of support and comfort; how the activity of their minds and the meddling of their information, without the discretion of religious principles to control them, lead them into turbulence, and draw down the vengeance of the laws; and how the infatuation of rulers, encourages party interests, improvident and partial legislation, and brings about popular ruin and distress; and how these same causes, meddling, selfish, and heedless, in-

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duce false and inconsistent conduct in both the people and their legislators. And we have also noticed how these causes produce more active mischief in popular governments, than in governments where popular influence is not allowed to clash so immediately with the purposes and plans of the legislature; and yet how desirable it is for the popular interests, that popular opinion should exert its legitimate moral influence in every department of the State. And on the other hand, we have remarked how powerfully and beneficially popular intelligence, together with popular virtue, operate in bridling the inconsiderate and selfish passions of individuals and multitudes; how they may constrain the rulers to consult the public weal; and how they may control the improvident and discontented habits of the people. And seeing how greatly and certainly popular opinion extends its influence into every relation of life, from that of individuals, to that of the cabinet of state; we would now deduce how important and essential it must be, that such an influence, working so extensively and vigorously, should be of that description which shall conduce to individual and national prosperity and happiness; should be productive of good and not evil; should be virtuous and not vicious; that the principles of Christianity should be so diffused that they shall take the place of indeterminate and prejudicial motives; and, in short, that a wise and virtuous purpose, together with a prudent and dispassionate spirit, should be

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brought to rule the actions, and sway the dispositions of those who rule, and those whose opinions must necessarily exert so unbounded an influence upon the conduct of the rulers of empires, and the people at large; of nation upon nation; and of nations and individuals upon the world.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR UTOPIA.

THE sublime views which Plato took of the capacities of the human soul, apparently led him, as similar views have led many modern philosophers, to open more flattering prospects to society, than yet have been, or probably ever can be, realized from its own merely moral efforts. That a republic should be constituted, in which all its members were to be guided by motives of justice and good conscience in all their dealings and transactions with each other, and to live together happily, enjoying each the fruits of his own labours, or having all things in common, is in the outset assuming that its members will do so upon the plan being suggested to them; not taking into account the variableness of opinion, the fickleness of temper, the depravity of human nature itself, and the vacillation of its circumstances. More's Utopia is, by name at least, familiar to all; and nothing is now commoner than to hear plausible but impracticable schemes of happiness, denominated "utopian." The first

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term essential to their proposition, is invariably omitted by those who advocate such utopian fraternities. They assert that by pursuing certain rules of justice and reason, man might attain a state of perfect bliss. They assume that the dictates of reason are sufficient to direct; and that men are able to follow them. They omit to premise, that if human nature were perfect, devoid of false appetites and passions, and only susceptible of feeling, thinking, and acting correctly, then they would naturally adopt the rules of justice and reason, and attain the ultimatum of terrestrial felicity. If human nature were perfect, people would act by justice and reason; and then there would be no further occasion for the interference and control of armies and rulers.

Every faction is the result of conflicting interests and opinions. All governments are dependent upon popular opinion or acquiescence. If a people desire any particular legislative change, what is to prevent its taking place? Nothing, but a difference of opinion, as to the circumstances of the change.

When all men are brought under the influence of one Holy Spirit and one divine law, and not till then, their utopia may be realized!

Plato seems to have considered the rectitude of the human conduct to depend upon wisdom, and subduing the passions. There was much wisdom in his conclusion. The peripatetic philosophers made the chief good to consist in following the course of nature—they made mental perfection to

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be virtue and sapience; but, like all Pagan philosophers, they possessed only the fallacious standard of human reason to regulate and define what was wise and virtuous. Lenon, and his followers, the stoics, said that all good rested in virtue; a virtue that consisted in taking every thing for the best, rendering men at once regular, benevolent, and resigned; yet, like their predecessors, they had only the same standard to direct them; and they even took a more partial view of nature than the former, inasmuch as their passive resignation taught them to resist the common feelings and sympathies of fellow-men. Afterwards came Epicurus, who taught that it was natural to seek pleasure and avoid pain. The sophists, before the time of Socrates, maintained upon a principle similar to this, that pleasure was the only good, and pain the only evil. However, Epicurus extended this principle with greater sagacity, and applied it not only to present pleasure and pain, but taught that those things which ultimately tend to the greatest happiness or misery, are accordingly the best, or the worst, and that therefore virtue was the greatest good, because it proves in the end to be the pleasantest rule of conduct.

Thus some placed happiness in virtue; others, in sapience; and others, in that which tended to the greatest good; and some, in the absence of pain.

So much for heathen philosophers. And as for modern infidels and rationalists, they discourse

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much in the same strain—they advocate justice, reason, and equality; and yet, of all men, they are the most unreasonable who expect the reckless and self-interested majority of mankind to practise any such principles.

"Oh! ye people, would ye enjoy peace and prosperity, independence and contentment? Trust not in your rulers; put not faith in princes—act by prudence and reason; and restrain the tumult of your passions; you will then be your own counsellors; you will then be the promoters of your own comfort." Such might be the language of such teachers.

And others there are, who with a more contracted philosophy, seem to rest all their aspirations and hopes upon some single law, some favourite measure, or darling form of government, which they may have either thought, or read, or heard of; and pertinaciously adhering to that one topic, and lightly esteeming every other, harp so exclusively and frequently upon one string, that like a certain noted Italian upon a more musical instrument, they really bring out astonishing results; and although every one be convinced that their theories are more ingenious than useful, and that the performers themselves, although truly sincere, are notwithstanding *politically mad;* yet some persons are so charmed and carried away with their confident assurances and pertinent appeals, that every where they foment discontent with the existing institutions of society, and encourage

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many to speculate upon a *utopia*, which they think they have a right to enter, and of which they are persuaded that their rulers, and the rich and great, monopolize the golden key.

All men are agreed that happiness is better than misery; that virtue is more commendable than vice; and that liberty, personal and political, is better than bondage and despotic influence; but we find that philosophers, and those who appeal to their own reason, greatly differ as to the best means of attaining what they all allow to be so desirable. How incoherent and crude, if not palpably absurd, is frequently the reasoning of the greatest men upon the phenomena of nature, amongst which, those of the human mind are not the least difficult! How often does it happen that some oversight, or strange delusion, occasions us to arrive at an erroneous determination in even very common matters! It is evident that the Pagans were completely at a loss respecting any standard of moral discipline; and although we may possess one, yet as when the mariner unconsciously misled by the variation of his compass, deviating but one point, veers perhaps hundreds of miles from his proper course; so, but a slight deviation may lead the ablest and best men far from the direct path of moral rectitude.

Philosophers generally view the faculty of reason in its full operation, as if all men were or might be altogether under its influence; when in reality, very few ever think of deliberately exercising it in

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the business of life. Men are far more led by experience, or constrained by circumstances, than guided by reason; which is in strictness the rigid arrangement and application of facts in the order of cause and effect; but is in term commonly misapplied to what is nothing more than mere inferences and supposition. Ignorance, in its widest import, and prejudice, and passion, are the natural hindrances of reason, and education is not enough to remove them; for it is an ignorance of particular contingencies and circumstances, which nothing but actual experience may be adequate to dispel. Hence the fallibility of human reason, and its incompetency to ensure an undeviating course of either individual or national prosperity.

"Let us retire," said the philosophers, "into the happy valley, where we may uninterruptedly follow the dictates of reason, and enjoy the harmonies of an intellectual and natural state of existence. We will cultivate our own lands, hew our own wood, carry our own water, and secure our own felicity."

Thus resolving, they went, and some of them enjoyed for many years a life of rural retirement, for it was nothing more. Some, however, soon tired of this exclusive state of existence. And finally, the next generation differing about their individual interests and duties, and led by other inclinations, blended again with the society around them, and participating in its habits, partook equally of its many vicissitudes. Then said the

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philosophers, " it is evident that we cannot get all men to be guided by reason." In short, on speculative points, few minds think alike; neither can every individual in the society, at discretion, become a philosopher.

The very order of society depends upon various individuals devoting their heads and hands to various occupations; so that whatever democracy there may be nominally created with respect to popular acts, there is no democracy in nature with respect to the functions of the mind. A democracy is perhaps the most plausible form of government in popular theory, yet very inferior in practical results, because the government and its offices are too much at the mercy of those who are too little skilled to do or suggest any thing politically efficient. " How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad? That driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks? He giveth his mind to make furrows; and is diligent to give the kine fodder. So every carpenter and work-master, that laboureth night and day; and they that cut and grave seals, and are diligent to make great variety, and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch to finish a work: the smith also sitting by the anvil, and considering the ironwork, the vapour of the fire wasteth his flesh, and he fighteth with the heat of the furnace; the noise of the hammer and anvil is ever in his ears, and his eyes look still upon the pattern of the thing that he maketh;

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he setteth his mind to finish his work, and waiteth to polish it perfectly; so doth the potter sitting at his work, and turning the wheel about with his feet: who is alway carefully set at his work, and maketh all his work by number; he fashioneth the clay with his arm, and boweth down his strength before his feet; he applieth himself to lead it over; and he is diligent to make clean the furnace —all these trust to their hands; and *every* one is wise in his work. Without these cannot a city be inhabited; and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down; they shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit on the judge's seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment: they cannot declare justice and judgment: and they shall not be found where parables are spoken. But they will maintain the state of the world; and their desire is in the work of their craft."

But the wisdom of these maxims is not weighed by the factious and ignorant. They are deplorably deluded who are told and believe that every citizen who has a good opinion of himself, is entitled and qualified to sit in public counsel, or on the judge's seat. They who declare justice and judgment, possess minds very differently tutored from those who hold the plough and glory in the goad, and whose talk is of bullocks. Neither is good legislation the crude result of fanciful theory, nor that of the experience of one man, or one generation of men. By experience we discover what is useful;

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and in the experience of a thousand years we observe the gradual development of national institutions, customs, and laws, which have become so identified with the genius of the nation, that we might scarcely know, if it were not for historic records, whether they have given birth to the character of the people, or the latter had given birth to them. It is by such a mutual adaptation alone, that the conduct of a community becomes harmonized and systematic. And it is by a due attention to the lessons of experience, that useful reforms, according to the circumstances of the times, are introduced without violence either to individual interests, or the harmony of the political constitution. The abstract reasoning of individuals, apart from the dictates of common experience, is as arbitrary as any of the assumptions and gratuitous theories of ancient philosophers. The object of all of them is the promotion of human happiness and prosperity. The objects of science also can only be attained by eliciting facts; for we cannot reason beyond our facts. And politics itself is a practical science, and is as liable to derangement by the speculations of theorists, as the affairs of individuals are by their own.

But what signifies perfection in the machine, if the *primum mobile* be itself inadequate or inappropriate? All the parts would soon become disjointed, or for ever stand still. If the people themselves be degenerated and depraved, which of them either would or could pursue the routine of

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perfect laws, even supposing that they imagined they had obtained them? The private conduct of each individual in the community has a much more immediate influence upon his own welfare than any thing that can be done for him by princes or rulers. Every man is, in a comprehensive sense, constituted the sole warden of his own happiness. Conscious of this, philosophers have in all ages placed the scene of human felicity amid some utopia, or retreat of innocence and virtue.

But alas for the systems of ancient philosophers! which, be it remembered, display some of the sublimest vagaries of unassisted human intelligence; they crumble to atoms and chaotic confusion, beneath the touch of demonstrative truth. The religions of Paganism vanish away before the keen glance of knowledge; and the world discovers that the phantoms which ignorance and superstition depicted amid the darkness of intellectual gloom, no where exist. Mohammed, aware of the consequence, threw a thick veil over the minds of his followers, for he foresaw that knowledge must be excluded, for imposture to succeed. The religions of heathenism have passed away with the people who professed to believe in them; but that is not the case with those works and doctrines which were founded upon truth. The superstitions of the ignorant, and the vague traditions from a barbarous age, were too palpably irrational and demoralizing to impose upon the more intelligent part of even ancient communities. Aristotle, in

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his Ethics, controverts the doctrine of the plurality of deities. Aristophanes holds up to ridicule various subjects of the popular mythology. And as for the oracles, Eusebius says that six hundred persons among the Pagans had written against them. An intelligent people will sift equally the dogmas of their priests, and the mandates of their prince.

> Son of the morning, rise! approach you here!
> Come—but molest not yon defenceless urn;
> Look on this spot—a nation's sepulchre!
> Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.

The sophist has in all ages risen above the superstitions of his times; and has expatiated in the fields of reason, and luxuriated in the gardens of nature, till in endless mazes lost, he sinks down in despair amid his lonely wanderings. He mocked the superstitions of those around him; and when he attempted to build up his systems of Stoicism, Epicureanism, Platonism, Paganism, Mohammedanism, or Atheism, philosophy mocked him in his turn, with confusion, at that Babel of opinions.

All the theories of antiquity which have been refuted, or laid aside, were contrary to experimental knowledge and reasonableness. But there are many things which recommend themselves to our reason after they are made known to us, although we might never have been able by reason to have discovered them ourselves. Thus Butler remarks, that Christianity, as the moral system of nature, "approves itself almost intuitively, to a reasonable

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mind upon seeing it proposed." And there are other parts of revelation which, although they may not be weighed by reason, are yet not contrary to it. This, however, was not the case with the ancient theories which incurred the contempt of philosophers. This rationality should not be lost sight of in a system of Christian education.

It is somewhere observed by Tertullian, "that the most ignorant peasant under the Christian dispensation, possesses more real knowledge than the wisest of the ancient philosophers." In confirmation of this, we may sometimes hear uneducated Christians of very ordinary minds, discourse upon matters of moral well-being, with a shrewdness and knowledge of practical virtue surpassing any thing that ancient philosophers have written upon the subject.

Many advocates of popular instruction treat the subject of education as if we should thereby be enabled to impart to the lower orders of society an intelligence all but divine; whereas we cannot help remarking, how few of those classes who receive the best education, appear either to possess a liking or capacity for any but very ordinary pursuits. We are not to look for creative virtues in any species of tuition. The schoolmaster is but the cultivator of the soil subjected to his moral discipline. A barren or depraved mind, may with all its merely scientific accomplishments, retain its depravity.

In Petrarch's time, Florence educated about ten

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thousand children out of a population of about ninety thousand persons. This was during the period of the revival of learning in Italy, an age in which there was scarcely any part of that country uninfluenced by intellectual refinement; when, during the progress of nearly three centuries, her bards, her historians, sculptors, and painters, achieved performances which not only Italy, but the world, may ever continue to admire and extol. Then if literature and a refined intellect were sufficient to inculcate the eternal principles of rational liberty and justice, how came it to pass, that at that very period when Italy was the centre of learning and refinement in Europe, her polite inhabitants were probably the most flagrantly immoral and atrociously iniquitous people in this quarter of the globe? It matters not whether the fault rested with their rulers or the people themselves. Their warlike spirit had subsided; but was there peace? It was but to give way, as Machiavelli discloses, to a more dastardly and fatal system both as regarded their home and foreign policy. Intrigue and assassination were now their most boasted and successful scheme of revenging private injuries, and retaliating upon foreign cabinets. And at the root of all this, lay the hotbed whence it all sprang; their moral depravity and private vices. Their learning and mental refinement, apparently only served to render them more exquisitely depraved. What was once said of Babylon, the glory of the Chaldees, may be

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appropriately applied to this and other once flourishing empires,—" thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee." There is nothing in the very highest branches of philosophy and the fine arts, but what the veriest demons themselves may be adept in. The veriest demon, clothed in philosophy and refinement, may pass for an angel of light.

In the precedent of other ages and empires, we practically recognise the development of events which sceptical reasoners might otherwise dispute. There we see nations educated and intelligent, but regardless of morality and religion, sunk in vice, fallen and lost. There is no doubt that polite education conduces to develope the human energies and capacities—but what are these? They include as well vices as virtues—they spring up together, but no regenerating effect being produced upon this depraved nature, the vices in the long run outstrip the virtues.

In the times to which we allude, the people in general gave themselves up to the indulgence of their own passions; and in Venice they prostituted their political freedom to those objects. The effect was to divide the state into almost as many parties as there were families, each of whom sought to forward their own private interests in despite of the influence which they might have upon the community at large. The general good was at length lost sight of; and the people abetted the interests of parties in the same way as the unprincipled do still in modern Europe, and forgot

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or overlooked the grand common cause. Families themselves were divided in these contests—brother against brother. Fratricide, incest, assassinations, conspiracies, were crimes common to this epoch; and perhaps not to be accounted the least of them, was that laxity of morals and manners amongst the females, which was not only attended with their own disgrace, but with the corruption of all the social ties of relatives, friends, and compatriots. Such was the influence of the latter vices, that the government of Venice was constrained to infringe the liberty of the constitution by prohibiting all courtisans from entering the state. To detail the vices of every class, would be to write a history of the decline of Venetian independence. Never was there a people more lost to all virtue; never a republic more literally abandoned to the vices of corrupt human nature.

Similar was also the state of the Romans at the time of the decline of the ancient empire. During the period of its glory, the people were, by their ever active military occupations, kept from listlessness, party feuds, and demoralizing excesses. When they became luxurious and immoral, the insulted deities left them to their fate—

> Di multa neglecti dederunt
> Hesperiæ mala luctuosæ.

The rulers and people became equally venal and licentious—no sort of crime or wickedness was wanting to complete their abandoned degeneracy;

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and languishing in luxury, they gradually lost that empire which they had lost moral energy to retain—

Sævior armis
Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciscitur orbem.

During intervals of peace, and the reigns of rulers, emperors, or caliphs, that promoted literature and the arts and sciences, Greece and Rome, Egypt and Moorish Spain, attained that state of prosperity and grandeur which has justly rendered them celebrated in history, and has made those particular times worthy of our admiration. But devoid of any fixed moral principle, and depending exclusively for their celebrity upon the disposition of a reigning monarch, or the contingencies of fortunate times, and the influence of a class of men, the people, themselves little better than barbarians, awaited but the demise of the first, or the change of the second, and then were ready, or even eager, to revert to their former turbulence and warfare; or, if the fatal tranquillity lasted too long, they, perhaps, sank into that state of lethargy and degeneracy, which marked the downfal of the mistress of the world. Those epochs were, indeed, brilliant; but they were transient, inasmuch as their causes were so. A wise administration characterized the times, but it was grounded upon no permanent principle —its glory waned with one generation; or whilst it matured the virtues, it also ripened the counteracting vices of mankind.

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The events of the past, are practical lessons to the present times. If, with all our learning and light, infidelity and vice in every form characterize our own times, demark the higher ranks as well as the lower, the parliamentary representative as well as his constituents; if bad faith, a *fides punica*, blemish our transactions with each other; if a lying spirit be abroad, and we be travelling the same road that empires have gone before us, the crisis, as well as its intermediate consequences, are melancholy to contemplate. Well might Alamanni predict of Venice,

> Se non cangi pensier, l'un secol solo
> Non conterà sopra 'l millesimo anno
> Tua libertà, chi va fuggendo a volo.

Who would not be glad to escape from such a world where neither reason nor justice seem to be otherwise than nominally recognised! Well may the philosopher imagine to himself the consoling possibility of reaching that land, or discovering the happy valley, where he may find out that perfection which no where else exists! Shall we set out with Rasselas from the sweet repose of his native fields, and wandering through the most famous cities and popular society, return with him at last to find in a contented breast that happiness which no where else he found!

There was a sublime character of which we read in Christian records, that seemed once to justify all that philosophy could conceive of human perfection.

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A character whose conduct was regulated by consummate wisdom; and whose passions appeared to be only subservient to the development of holy energies. This character was the Christian. And now it is with wonder we contemplate that at once happy and suffering being; that twice born, mysterious character! The love of God was the constraining motive of all his actions—the Spirit of God was upon him; and its influence was to him, what every breath of passion, and every thrill of sense, is to the ordinary man.

With the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come, before him, who has such motives to virtue as the Christian? and who is so motiveless as the mere sophist? "As for the philosophers," says Bacon, "they make imaginary laws, for imaginary commonwealths; and their discourses are as the stars, which give little light, because they are so high."

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CHAPTER VIII.

PROSPECTS OF MODERN EMPIRES.

THEOPHRASTUS commences his treatise upon ethical characters, with the following remark:—"when I first reflected upon this subject, I, indeed, oftentimes wondered, nor do I yet cease wondering, why we do not all possess with each other the same habits, since the whole of Greece is subject to the same climate, and all the Greeks are brought up in the same kind of way"—*συμβεβηκεν ἡμιν ου τὴν αυτην ταξιν των τροπων εχειν.* And although it would be no less remarkable if the inhabitants of different countries, men who inhabit the same earth, and possess the same nature and generic faculties, should not likewise be capable of performing the same duties, and enjoying the same happiness; yet it might be considered more marvellous, if individuals so variously organized, endowed with such different degrees of strength, such opposite fortunes, and influenced by such different circumstances, should, notwithstanding these differences, which operate so powerfully in varying all other creatures,

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have all still retained the same inclinations and tempers, and have been still distinguished by the same modifications of character.

It is, on the contrary, provided by nature, that to all her children unequal gifts should be granted, and dissimilar talents entrusted; so that whilst each individual may participate in the common happiness of his race, yet each shall contribute in a different way towards that co-operation of skill and fortune which unconsciously tends to the advantage of all.

Yet we cannot help remarking, how similar are the characteristics of the human nature among children, notwithstanding their diversity in respect of individual talents, even in different countries; whilst their parents as remarkably vary in their characters and manners according to the different parts of the world to which they respectively belong. And is it not possible, that at least the moral habits of after-life, may be so modified, and the sympathies of men, and their civil characters, so assimilated, as in a great measure to merge many of their present local and national peculiarities, and like the simplicity of children, resemble them more to the members of one human family? There is nothing in the diversity of intellectual acquirements in different ages, and amongst contemporary states and individuals, but what a wider diffusion of general information may be supposed capable of removing, and of thereby assimilating human intelligence.

We observe the melancholy consequences of war,

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in the interruption and perversion of national improvement and industry; and that some nations are more exposed to these vicissitudes than others—and that some people are under the dominion of despots, who despise and restrict all liberal knowledge and pursuits; whilst others flourish under free and enlightened governments.

People confined to merely local information and habits, are apt to contract jealousies and prejudices, which frequent intercourse, and similar information, ultimately remove. Let them only see that there is no occasion for such jealousies, but that their real interests are mutual, and then we shall hear no more of Scotch, and English, and French antipathies—we shall then have no more laws suggesting an odious inference, and invidious distinctions, between either nations or parties.

The Mohammedans were taught, like the Jews of old, to carry uncompromising hostility against the professors of every other religion; the consequence of which was, an interruption to the free and intimate intercourse with the rest of men, which is essential to the prosperity and happiness of every people. On the other hand, Christianity, inculcating universal charity and good-will to man, leads its professors to associate freely and friendly with persons of every creed and community.

Such are some of the differences of character that such causes produce; and without adducing further instances, it will suffice here to observe, that all the differences of national character, appear to be re-

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ducible to two classes; either the peculiarities of the species, climate, and local circumstances, or, the moral and intellectual proficiency of the people, and the influence of their religion and civil polity.

The former class of influences, personal and local, may be, humanly considered, unalterable, affording perpetual inducements for the interchange of commercial and even social visits, between the various families of the human race. The latter class of influences are more likely to become assimilated as education proceeds, as legislation improves, and Christianity diffuses itself over all the kingdoms of the earth.

But what chance, or appearance, is there of any such improvements taking place? If all the mightiest and most glorious empires of our globe have long ago broken up and vanished from the earth, what reason have we to anticipate any thing but that insignificancy to which man, by a continual degeneration, has a natural tendency to sink? This might have been true of men in a state of nature; but all our calculations and reasonings are now inseparably joined with the agency of Christianity. It is by no means uncommon to hear the present times spoken of as degenerate and inglorious. Judged of by our architecture, we are certainly degenerate; estimated by our military ambition, we are, perhaps, inglorious. Yet, to complain of degeneracy, is but what our forefathers, the orators and poets of other ages and nations, have done before us with respect to themselves. It is true

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that the Rephaim and Anakim no longer have their parallels; and this may probably have given rise to the notion of human degeneracy, which, in this respect at any rate, has been tolerably stationary since the days of the deluge; but we have instead, men who can not only hurl the quoit, and bend the brazen bow, but weigh the spheres in their balances, fuse the diamond in their furnaces, and invest themselves with the mechanical puissance of the elements.

Unreflecting minds are generally too apt to be influenced in their opinions, by their own individual habits and experience; and to consider every innovation and change in the manners and customs of the age, as a falling away from all that has hitherto been esteemed excellent and genuine. The father tells the son, that things are very different now to what they used to be in his younger days; insinuating that the present times are always the most degenerate. The Roman satirists and poets make frequent allusion to this degeneracy. The Greeks do the same—and Homer pourtrays the superiority of the age of Hector, when he describes him heaving the huge stone against the gates of the Grecian encampment—a stone, that two men, such as mortals then were, could not lift on to a wain—Οἷοι νυν βροτοι εισι—. And again, Virgil describing Turnus dashing the massy rock at Æneas, makes the people in his time, *cæteris paribus*, just six times as degenerate as those of the time of the former poet—the massive rock being so huge, that scarcely twelve

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picked men could support it, being of such stature as the land then produced—"Qualia nunc hominum producit corpora tellus."

But in reality, the length of life has in these latter ages been nearly equal; and as to force of bodily strength, it greatly depends upon the athletic pursuits which men are induced to follow, and which are not so necessary now as they used to be, though where adopted, they produce similarly extraordinary feats of strength; as for instance, in British seamen, the keelmen on the river Tyne, and many private individuals. There are, perhaps, no where a finer set of men as a body, than the British gentry, whose fortunes and leisure, at once provide them with the best diet, and afford them those recreations and attention to health, which other people are obliged to dispense with. Logan, in his "Scottish Gaël," observes that, "The strong and robust bodies of the Celtæ, their comeliness and great strength, have been remarked by all ancient authors who have had occasion to notice them. These qualifications must have been produced by a sufficient supply of food, by their temperance, and by the freedom and activity of their lives—hunting, pasturage, agriculture, and athletic amusements, being almost their sole occupations, when not engaged in warfare." Forsooth, how truly degenerate in their eyes, would our sedentary race appear!

It is, indeed, obvious that particular states, like certain seminaries, have sunk beneath their former

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rank in the world of letters; but this may be owing to the political changes which those states have since undergone, and especially the withering influence of superstition and tyranny upon the mass of the people. But there are individual exceptions, which sufficiently reveal the latent spark, but do not make up the national character; yet we may almost presume to class together the celebrated philosophers and poets of modern Italy, and of England, Germany, France, and ancient Greece, and Rome; and, in so doing, we might venture to say that the degeneracy complained of, has not, upon the whole, taken place. And when we reflect that civilization and knowledge are now more generally disseminated than formerly, it is no longer surprising that, amongst nations equally eminent as one another, any particular state or man, Athens and Rome, Socrates and Cicero, should cease to be the exclusive oracles of the earth—our resources are multiplied and our celebrity is divided. And the same kind of result may be looked for amongst every people who cultivate letters—they will gradually strike out new lights; every district will have its leading genius; and instead of one state, or one town, or man, monopolizing all the wit of the world; it will be generally diffused, like the light of creation, through all the social system.

New arts and sciences have been invented and cultivated, and old ones neglected, or in great degree forgotten, on account of their having become useless, or been superseded by other inven-

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tions. The ancients were contented to extend their conquests into neighbouring territories, which were no sooner won than wrested from them; but the moderns have carried their conquests into other elements; and in the application of steam to the purposes of machinery have acquired a dominion infinitely more supreme. If our forefathers could at any time boast of dispensing with stockings or umbrellas, it was because they were ignorant how to supply them. If they gloried in the smoke of their fires, it was because they were not ingenious enough to construct chimneys. Thus the barbarians of the present day may similarly pride themselves in their nudity of all the comforts of civilized society—and thus, the vulgar do actually ridicule many of those conveniences and comfortable habits, which are peculiar only to those who can afford to purchase them. But this says nothing against the utility of all those new inventions which are ever and anon adding to the stock of human comforts. Experience approves them. Many of them are conducive to health and strength; and others, are essential to expedition and success in carrying on the common concerns of life. Suppose Sultan Bello's eyes were to become dim with age, so that he could with difficulty discern the objects around him; we may imagine that he would prize a good pair of spectacles, which, like a miracle, restore sight to the blind. In short, all the conveniences, as well as scientific improvements of modern days, are the result of gradual experience as to what ex-

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pedients man can adopt to preserve life and to make it happier—machinery, to abridge labour, and yet do more work—candles to lengthen the day and brighten the night—and vehicles to transport him, as on spirits' wings, to the world's and his wit's end.

Such are a few of the happy results of past industry and intelligence; and similar and happier effects may be rationally anticipated from the increased knowledge and virtue of a wiser and better age. But in order that it may be a better as well as a wiser, it devolves upon each generation to superintend and promote the virtuous rearing of the next. And as Christians, it is particularly incumbent upon us to disseminate abroad not only the principles of our religion, but also the useful knowledge which we possess; and not to immure it, as another age superstitiously was wont to do, in temples and shrines; albeit, less to the satisfaction of the classic owl of Minerva, which finds not now so many venerable ruins where to deposit her unclean nest; but, perhaps, more to the happiness of that humble bird which secures its dwelling about the warm thatch of the cottage, and the corners of the household altar.

What there is now left of the elaborate architecture of our old cathedrals, not merely excites our admiration at the display of consummate art, but also at the magnificent taste and genius of our ancestors, in works which no longer to the same degree engage the talent of our country. The

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change of manners in this respect is readily accounted for, when we consider that the days of monkish superstition and seclusion are gone by; and that present utility rather than sumptuous architecture, is the chief aim of modern society. The time, labour, and expence, which the former would necessarily demand, would now be reluctantly, if at all, bestowed upon what are esteemed rather works of taste and superstition than real use. If the British empire were now overwhelmed, as some former empires were, it would be very dubious what character posterity, a thousand years hence, would be able to assign to us, if they were only to judge of us by the remains of our national edifices. There might be the sites of large towns, of wharfs and bridges, and vestiges of canals and roads, and a few more such marks of former industry; but it must be from the history of our doings, from our intellectual remains, our laws, and the works of our poets, philosophers, and divines, that they shall judge of our greatness and real worth.

If the Egyptians erected their temples of eternity, in the vain expectation that the souls of the deceased, would at some remote period return to the embalmed bodies, and occupy in peace those mansions which, when living, they constructed; it could only require a little more reflection to teach them that their labours might in reality be all in vain—that conquerors, such as themselves had seen; that natural convulsions, and the wasting hand of time, would, in all probability, work such changes, as to

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render all their care abortive. But, perhaps, the principal cause of men ceasing from those prodigies of assiduity, may be ascribed to their change of pursuits, and circumstances, their barbarism, poverty, or indifference. It may be owing to the altered views which one age may take of the objects for which such things were intended by a preceding generation. If they were temples of superstition, then, upon the exposure and wane of the latter, its objects would also be neglected. Thus, in a more recent age, the puritans and presbyterians gloried in demolishing those magnificent monasteries, which it had been the pride of their Roman Catholic ancestors to construct and dedicate to the worship of the self-same God, whom the former thought that they served better in their destruction. If the mutual relation of kings and their subjects as recognized in modern times, be contrasted with the deified position of ancient princes, we shall not marvel, that the popular reverence now manifested, should show itself in a different way than by expending all the strength of the state in the erection of royal palaces, and in forging golden manacles for themselves and their posterity. And if massy walls and heavy armour are found inefficient to protect cities and people from the assaults of modern ordnance, it is no wonder that better expedients should supersede them. These causes may, to be sure, not be thought of at the time when the changes are occurring; yet it is evident, from the history of empires, that such have been the occasion of those

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revolutions in the customs and character of nations, which are equally striking as those of their governments themselves.

The great national works upon which our ingenuity is now exercised, are with the view of promoting commerce and traffic. Thus, instead of amphitheatres and pyramids, we construct railroads, with carriages moving along them twenty miles an hour; we form canals, establish manufacturies, invent machinery, and glory in the peaceful triumphs of intellectual improvements. And it is not impossible but that at some coming period, as the wealth and enthusiasm of communities increase, the world again may behold, even in nations at the summit of civilization, national edifices as imposing as those that were ever reared in honour of any superstition.

From a general view of ancient and modern history; knowledge and civilization seem to follow the prosperity of nations, whether in arms or commerce. This appears to arise from the activity of the popular mind during such periods, and the increased intercourse which is maintained at home and abroad. And although the glory of commercial renown may pass away as well as all other human distinctions, yet its beneficial effects are more enduring than any good that results from war. The sun of commerce set upon Venice when it rose on Lisbon. When Gama discovered the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, the stream of commerce rushed into the new channel, and almost left the ships of the former emporium

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upon dry land in the old one. Upon the events of this period, Hume remarks, "the enlargement of commerce and navigation increased industry and the arts every where—the nobles dissipated their fortunes in expensive pleasures—men of inferior rank both acquired a share in the landed property, and created to themselves a considerable property of a new kind, in stock, commodities, art, credit, and correspondence. In some nations the privileges of the commons increased by this increase of property—in most nations the kings, finding arms to be dropped by the barons, who could no longer endure their former rude manner of life, established standing armies, and subdued the liberties of kingdoms—but in all places the condition of the people, from the depression of the petty tyrants by whom they had formerly been oppressed rather than governed, received great improvement; and they acquired, if not entire liberty, at least the most considerable advantages of it."

Without looking forward to any thing like human perfectibility, or even a universal diffusion of knowledge and happiness amongst individuals, we may assuredly expect a more general participation in these blessings by people in the aggregate—this is what we should aim at, and anticipate. Commerce is extending the intercourse of nations, knowledge enlightening their understandings, and religion rectifying their sentiments.

> Una Fides, Pondus, Mensura, Moneta sit una,
> Et status illæsus totius orbis erit.

By the diffusion of learning, the lessons of

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experience which history and science afford may be equally spread among all nations; and by these means, the present chief cause of their difference in sentiment may be gradually done away. And again, by the intercourse which commerce promotes, their existing jealousies, antipathies and prejudices may naturally be expected to cease, in the same way as they have already to a considerable extent done amongst the principal European empires; and more than all this may be reasonably anticipated, to be brought about by the influence of the same religion upon the hearts, the passions, the morals and motives of the bulk of the human family, when Christianity shall have become universally propagated. *Christianise our seamen and they will Christianise the world.* Education and the diffusion of learning, assimilate the historical experience of empires—commerce neutralises their prejudices; and the same religion reveals to them the same moral truths; and the whole of these causes conjointly bind them to each other as the members of one family, by the ties of the same sympathies, interests and affections.

All such sympathies, as they even now exist, at once direct us to a medium through which, if ever, the scattered millions of mankind, now at enmity, may be brought into affiance with each other. The physical pecularities of countries and people may never be assimilated, nor does it appear desirable that they should. Each land has its own produce to yield; and each individual man,

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an office to perform suited to his own character and circumstances. But if the interests of all were incompatible with each other, and the actions of all at variance with one another, confusion instead of order, war instead of peace, and antipathy instead of sympathy, would complete the misery of mortals. Instead of which, we constantly see by a sympathy of feeling and concurrence in sentiments, that men are naturally drawn together by bonds, which a unity of moral conduct is alone wanting to regulate and preserve entire.

And now reverting to the revolutions and decline of individual nations, we observe that the Assyrian, Persian, Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman Empires which flourished for so many ages, and attained such a pitch of glory; whose sages are yet remembered for their wisdom, and the names of whose princes and heroes still embellish our poetry; and whose works are at once their pride and our admiration; these once mighty empires and renowned geniuses have all long since terminated their career, and left little behind them besides the record that such men once lived and thought, and those magnificent ruins still testify that such nations once existed. We have seen how by a systematic ambition, they mutually tended to the destruction of each other. It was not that those empires were enfeebled by age—it was not that their resources could no longer hold out against their own necessities; but it was, that they acted upon a ruinous system of policy, establishing their own

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greatness upon the downfal of others, and dazzling the intellectual vision of their own minds with the brilliant successes of a false glory. It is observed by an eloquent writer in his life of Cicero, that from the railleries of the Roman authors on the barbarity and misery of Britain, "one cannot help reflecting on the surprising fate and revolutions of kingdoms; how Rome, once the mistress of the world, the seat of arts, empire, and glory, now lies sunk in sloth, ignorance, and poverty, enslaved to the most cruel as well as the most contemptible of tyrants, superstition and religious imposture; while this remote country, anciently the jest and contempt of the polite Romans, is become the happy seat of liberty, plenty and letters; flourishing in all the arts and refinements of civil life; yet running perhaps the same course which Rome itself had run before it, from virtuous industry to wealth; from wealth to luxury; from luxury to an impatience of discipline, and corruption of morals; till by a total degeneracy and loss of virtue, being grown ripe for destruction, it fall a prey at last to some hardy oppressor, and, with the loss of liberty, losing every thing that is valuable, sinks gradually again into its original barbarism."

Wherever similar principles of policy prevail, similar results may be of course expected; and although modern Europe recognizes the desirableness of a pacific policy, yet the ancient principle of ambition is far from being discarded. The thunders of Napoleon are yet sounding in her ears; and there

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can be little doubt that if that warlike genius had succeeded to the full extent of his projects, some of the most ancient empires in this quarter of the world had, ere this time, ceased to exist as independent nations. If, then, it be true that the same principles of policy which ruined ancient States are still inherent to European councils, it would be too much to say that even the most Christianized countries may not yet have to pass through the fire of many revolutions which it is impossible to foresee; notwithstanding which, when we regard the more liberal and enlightened views which are gradually developed by the different cabinets of European and American governments, it does not seem probable that any such annihilating consequences are to be apprehended from modern revolutions, as those which occurred in times when every State was jealous of the prosperity of its neighbour, and was ready to avail itself of every opportunity to aggrandise itself at the expense of others. Yet whatever may be the policy of statesmen and the voice of popular clamour, still it is not the wisdom of the former, nor the knowledge of the latter, which can prevent the disasters of olden times from recurring—the counsellors of Persia, Greece and Rome, were in their day as wise, and the people as patriotic as, perhaps, those of our own age. The only thing that essentially distinguishes modern from ancient communities, and opens to the former happier prospects, is the wide-spread, albeit latent, influence of Christianity. If it were not for

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this, there does not appear to be any reason why we might not, indeed, anticipate a continual series of the same melancholy revolutions which have overtaken all those nations which pursued the course of their own ambitious and indiscreet policy, and were either ignorant or negligent of the divine will.

It is the opinion of some enlightened minds that the time will come when not only all nations, but all individuals shall have so imbibed the spirit of Christian fellowship, that the need of political governments shall be superseded—when all shall so have the mutual good of each other at heart, that there shall no longer be enemies to resist, nor offences to punish—in the day when, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The time of peace and virtue has always been regarded as that of prosperity and happiness—when men "shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." It is the golden age in which, as Virgil says, in compliment to Pollio,

> Ille Deûm vitam accipiet, Divisque videbit
> Permixtos Heroas, et ipse videbitur illis;
> Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus Orbem.

In that time, proceeds the bard, the earth shall spontaneously produce the corn and the vine, the domestic animals shall multiply, poisonous reptiles shall become extinct, and Saturn shall return

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again to reign—then, as he more exquisitely breathes,

Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem.

The poet's ideas may indeed have been borrowed from the Sibylline books, and these may have been modified traditions derived from the Jews; yet from whatever source they came, they still re-echo the sentiments of those who use them and the age that receives them current.

Peaceful times not only allow the fruits of the vine and olive to flourish and ripen, but also the schemes and affairs of society to mature; so that however romantic the Saturnian times and golden age of classic authors may appear to those whose eyes are only used to the desolate spectacle of battle fields, the cheerless sight of starving paupers, and the barren prospect of barbarous countries; yet in reality they depict in a somewhat exaggerated style, what may be reasonably looked for in the natural consequences of a virtuous and pacific age. It is then that people in the quietude of their homes look to the real interests of domestic happiness—it is then that the culture of the heart is attended to, as well as that of the garden and field—it is then that commerce exerts its influence in bringing remote nations into friendly contact, mutually to relieve the wants and administer to the comforts of each other. Most of the ancient nations sought riches by war and rapine; but it is the object of commerce to gain the same ends by

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fair dealing; and thus, by avoiding provocation, escaping retaliation. In the absence of virtue, the wealth of Persia and Rome promoted luxury and degeneracy, instead of merely adding, as they naturally should do, to the comforts and elegancies of civilized society. In fine, the want or the perversion of Christian principles of conduct, may, on the whole, be regarded as the chief cause of all the miseries which both empires and individuals undergo. What did commerce do for the Tyrians but nourish pride and feed ambition and every human depravity, and fatten them like a goodly prey for avaricious enemies? What did it do for Troy, but lead her subjects into scrapes at foreign courts? What has it done for Britons? It has made them a "wonderful nation"—"a beautiful people!"—to use the expressions of an African prince. Thus the same pursuits, although in each instance tending to promote wealth, finally approximate to a fatal or happy crisis, according to the moral principles upon which they are conducted, and by which the application of their produce is directed; they tend to aggrandizement, spoliation, licentiousness, idleness, degeneracy, and ruin; or, conduce to wealth, refinement, benevolence, industry, and independence. As society at present exists, we perceive that whilst one class of individuals thrives, another starves—that the fluctuations of trade frequently occasion this disparity; and that the vices and imprudencies of individuals aggravate it indefinitely—and that the interference

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of the legislature for the purpose of aggrandising either the nation itself, or a mere party, tends to render that an object of ambition, which in its nature is, and should be, only the business of life.

We individually hold the balance in our own hands; and it rests with each, whether good or evil shall preponderate in the conduct of his life —and it remains with each, whether the influence which he possesses shall be exerted for the moral advancement of others, and to communicate a Christian bias to the minds of rising generations.

Where there is a predisposition to vice, as there is in all human beings, the balance will naturally preponderate against virtue. The Indians of America, and the barbarians of other countries, have by contact with our irregularities imbibed drunkenness and vice, instead of having amid better communications selected soberness and virtue; and thus do the youth of our land more greedily contract the vices than the virtues of society, unless by an early initiation, their minds be prepossessed by the spirit and doctrines of Christianity.

The object of social communities is the convenience and happiness of its members. It is not aggrandisement, nor wealth, nor extent of territories. Empires may, and most likely will be curtailed—wealth may, and probably will become more equally diffused—the majesty of princes may do homage to the majesty of the people. The empires of former ages, their glory, and the very deities in which they trusted, have passed away as

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transient as each other; and that people, and they alone, who recognize and obey the divine laws, may reasonably expect to escape the fate of all those nations which forget God. "God is great!" exclaimed the Algerine Dey, upon hearing of the dethronement of French Charles, "he first drove me from my throne, and now his own people have driven him from his!" God is great, who puts down the oppressor, whether it be by the arm of power, or the voice of opinion! "God is great, who renders the retribution of anarchy and despair to an unrighteous and factious people!"

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CHAPTER IX.

CATASTROPHE OF THE FROGS AND THE PEOPLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Oh! ye Frogs, at what do ye croak! we thought that ye were again contented and happy in your native lakes. "*Croak! Croak! Croak!*"—Oh! miserable creatures! Have ye again, led on by political incitement, degenerated from the peaceful contentment of your ancestors?—"Alas!" exclaimed a well-favoured Frog, "it appears to be the lot of all the creatures of the great Jove, either to be their self-tormentors, or the tormentors of each other."

It must be observed, that the French to this day, in imitation of the stork, devour well-fed Frogs, which they esteem a species of delicacy. Neither does it matter to the poor amphibious animals, whether this be done from motives of national hostility, or merely to appease the cravings of a capricious appetite. It is still a dire catastrophe for the peaceful borderers upon a civilized land of *freemen;* the result is all one to the ill-fated

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victims; and, therefore, it is natural for them to complain and to croak, whether they become martyrs to a Stork or a Gaul. Yet it is not all one with respect to the extent or nature of the evil. The rapacity of the Stork was in the nature of a judgment upon the entire tribe for their first political offences. The visitation of the Gaul, is a mere casualty of human appetite, arising from the habits of the people bordering upon the fens and lakes of particular districts, as in days of yore,—thus we are fated to hear the chaunting chorus, "*Croak! Croak! Croak!*"

No marvel that the Frogs complain of the fatal necessity of submitting to such hard conditions in this modern age of refinement; yet they cannot remedy it by any change of regimen, for they perceive that the laws of their nature are at fault, depriving them of the power of revenge,—neither can they avoid the evil otherwise, than by for ever abandoning an approximation to the luxuries of a civil community. There is many an innocent wretch of a Frog impaled by wanton youth, that would have eluded such a Fate, if more remote from the haunts of men. And there is many a man who would have himself escaped the woes of society if, avoiding political strife, he had chosen for his habitation the wide waste wilderness—had he even preferred the deprivations and dangers of the savage.

It is the lot of all men in the social state, to sacrifice a portion of their natural liberty; and to participate in the curses as well as blessings of the

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community. What meddling man is to the hapless Frogs, such are to man those restless spirits shrined in the popular breast, which in the midst of society influence the destinies of individuals. In the social state, individuals may, without fault of their own, suffer severely from the errors and depravities of others. It is only in a state of society where such catastrophes happen. It is only there, that people feel the miseries arising from the vices and circumstances of their neighbours. Amid barbarians they are more likely to be few but fatal—in civilized life, they are certain of being more complex and multifarious.

Then shall we desert society? Or shall each man seek to exterminate his neighbour! Or, oh! people of England, rife with knowledge, and full of the fire of *Liberty*, will ye teach us how to frame those supreme laws by which ye expect to restore human nature to its primeval innocence and perfection?

"We expect not perfection;" reply the people; "we only wish for equality of possessions, and for permission to seek our own happiness." Oh! people, no man prevents ye seeking rational happiness—but we must all have the like permission—one must not interfere with the other—we must have laws to secure this liberty, and as to equality of possession, that has not been decreed by God!—who, then, shall be our lawgiver? shall not the Divinity himself be a *Law* to every individual? And shall not a monarch prescribe rules to the

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State? "Never, never," say they, "shall a despot reign over us; for his will is law." Then who are such absolute despots as some of you, who would have your *will* to be law; and by force of intimidation, fright away freedom of conscience and opinion; render the master the slave or victim of his servants; and the peaceable portion of the public, the silent spectators of your fanatical *autos da fè*, in which even yourselves are at once the actors and the devoted sacrifice? Oh! people, better is one despot than a thousand. Your late intelligent Consul General *Salt*, residing at Cairo, thought the despotism of Egypt "quite as good as living under the influence of a mob." Is your law to be unanimity? Alas! where is it? Have your republics or democracies secured unanimity? History testifies that faction and the reverse of unanimity constituted the self-destroying principle of hose very favourite institutions!

Shall it be anarchy? Shall every man do as he will, and each become the unprotected prey of the other! Ye despise the laws—ye resist them—what matter whether by an *active* or *passive* resistance—the one is downright rebellion, the other incipient anarchy—both set at nought the existing institutions of society—both frown defiance upon the powers that be—both tend to national confusion, misery, and ruin—both are in reality *pro tanto* anarchy—the one rude, the other refined—and, therefore, anarchy shall be yours!

"Nay," say the people, "we will not have

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anarchy." Then ye shall have political liberty and equality! "Bravo! bravo! bravo!" exclaim the people. Yes, ye shall have them; and shall have them secured by the established principles of a thousand years, by the experience of many generations, by the suffrages and blood of your fathers, and by the laws of merry old England!

"But," continue the people of the nineteenth century, "have not the institutions of old England become quaint and cumbersome; and shall we not have a constitution and laws more commensurate with reason and the enlarged intelligence of our age?"

Oh! people, was wisdom, indeed, only born with you? Is the wisdom of one man or age paramount to the gradually developed and collective philosophy and experience of many generations? Is there any thing in the system thus built up, which forbids or prevents the present generation from enacting laws suitable to their own exigencies and advancement?—Yet never was there a happier contingency than that the circumstances of this nation should bring together in their ancient constitution the elements of a system so well adapted at all times; to counterbalance the power of the barons in former periods; and now, to moderate and balance the power of a knowing but most unreflecting generation—to keep in check the ideal speculations of even your most rational legislators, and the passion for change and new fangled expedients, which the threats of violence, or the influ-

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ence of party may infuse even into an otherwise deliberative senate. A system not built upon theory, but constituted by our national circumstances; which, in its working, has developed its true philosophy, in the moral check which the three estates of King, Lords, and Commons, notwithstanding their real interests, may be now nearly assimilated, reciprocally exert each upon the measures originated by the other, and each upon the passions and parties hurrying those measures forward; whilst the representatives of the people retain the power of visiting with confusion any hostile or headstrong opposition on the part of the other branches of the legislature. The balance of *self-interest* is generally held forth as the counterpoise that mutually holds them in check; but we would extend this influence to the entire moral power, adjusting itself in the balance of the opinions of different classes of minds, independent of each other. Nor was such a balance of moral influence more required in feudal times, when the moral power of the nation rested chiefly with the peers and king, than it is now when the moral power of the nation is altogether in favour of the *physical power of the people.*

Those who denounce a house of Lords, will, perhaps, still admit the efficacy of a house of *correction*, in sometimes successfully correcting the opinions and morals of unthinking individuals. Who could be less reflecting than those small Italian bands, who, a few years ago, projected in secret conclave,

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the shaking off of the Austrian yoke? The masses of their own countrymen were ignorant of their plans, and totally unqualified to assist in organizing the details of a great revolution. Opinion is without much weight in a country where its free discussion is prohibited. Moral power they possessed not; and the physical power of the empire of Austria was against them. They disregarded their actual circumstances, and proceeded upon theories dictated by liberal but not enlightened views. Their appeal was to arms, and the arms of high authority put them down. Poor fellows! how many of them languished for years in the state prisons of Italy and Germany! How many passed through the dungeon's gloom to an untimely grave! Poor Silvio Pellico, and Maroncelli! Little deserving were such men of such a fate as theirs. Yet the only thing of which they complained was, that a civilized nation should deem it expedient to visit political disaffection, with as harsh and cruel a sentence, as the crimes of the vilest delinquents. They bowed to existing laws which they had violated—they suffered a martyrdom—yet they, as well as others under like condemnation, acquired by reflection in the still recesses of their solitude, that piety, that sober mindedness, and respect for God and man, which, amid the whirl of faction and the unbridled exercise of libertine passions, they could not even dimly discern!

Thus may the most tender hearted men and cultivated minds, become deluded by the sudden im-

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pulse of sentiments, possibly, theoretically correct, but practically wrong, and live to see the day when they themselves shall confess that they had been deluded.

What applies to individuals may be applied to a nation, for without some cogently restraining principle in the constitution of the government, the sudden impulses of even the most rational theories, may as easily delude an empire into irretrievable perplexities and revolutions, as individuals into the worst political indiscretions.

"But," say the people of modern England, "some other and more rational check may surely be substituted for that of *feudal* distinction." Oh! people, truth at last must dictate to us all. If those who inherit feudal distinctions were to set themselves in feudal array against the just desires of an enlightened community, the event would soon show how transient are even the most ancient institutions. But beware! lest as the Athenians of old, who tormented themselves with the mere name of *Tyrant*, so ye torment yourselves with the mere names of orders and powers; and in rashly erasing a *Name*, repudiate also your best institutions themselves. "We know not," reply the peers, "what ye denominate more rational," but that appears to us most *reasonable*, which has been found by long, long experience, best to answer the ends of enlightened legislation. Do ye refer us to America? America is our triumph! The collocation of her states required some such form of government as she has

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adopted. Peers or patricians she had none, and did not want them. She wanted deputies to represent local interests; and she wanted minds less dependent, to act as a check upon the former, and who, by superintending the general weal, might balance the influence of the representatives of particular districts. She knew the advantage of a popular control over her rulers, but at the same time, of having a counterpoise of opinions in the legislative, and a singleness of purpose in the executive; she, therefore, in conclusion, erected a *President* instead of a King. Yet her form of government arose not from a preconceived theory —it was suggested by the circumstances of her union, and assimilated to the best tried form abroad. Her legislative is popular, and her executive monarchical; and so are your's—but with this difference; that your second chamber and your presidency are totally removed from direct popular influence, and, therefore, not so liable as her's to be counteracted or annihilated by the fickleness of a multitude, to the influence of which all the branches of her government are more or less directly subjected; so that whilst yours may remain unshaken and adequate to its functions through many generations, her's may become sooner fatally embarrassed, if not overpowered by an increased and wayward population. We, therefore, deny, that, for a great and prosperous community, the constitution of her government is by any means so stable. effective, and influential as our own—we deny that

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her legislation is more enlightened than our own —and we deny that, on this account, her population is either happier, more wealthy, more intelligent, or more prosperous than you are! Have ye numbered the slaves dwelling in darkness in the midst of this irradiant people? The Americans enjoy the facilities and hopefulness of an infant country—they are not yet burthened with a surplus population; neither have they the valuable relics of ancient customs and institutions to modify, according to modern improvement and advancement; nor the international tactics, jealousies, and hostilities, of neighbouring nations to contend with—they are jealous of us, and vain of their country as of a precocious child; and eulogise its native advantages wherever they go. But you are chiefly oppressed with an overgrown population; with the competition in trade of a flourishing and speculative community; and harassed with the discontent and *agitation* of individuals who regard only the *results*, and not the deeply seated *causes*, of all that you and your rulers have to struggle against; and fancying yourselves most wretched, although so rendered by nothing else than your own discontent, follies and vices, you believe that even ambitious, revolutionary, and vacillating France is far better off than glorious old England, and that the perfection of *Utopia* lies beyond the ocean towards the west!

Was there ever a people of antiquity so foolish, so ready to sacrifice real and confessed good in the freak of wanton experiment, or for positive evil?

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People there have, indeed, been so simple, as willingly to hazard every thing for the gratification of a *mania*, or the illustration of a *theory!*

> "So th' ancient stoics, in their porch,
> With fierce dispute maintained their church;
> Beat out their brains in fight and study,
> To prove that virtue is a body;
> That bonum is an animal,
> Made good with stout polemic brawl;
> In which some hundreds on the place
> Were slain outright; and many a face
> Retrench'd of nose, and eyes, and beard,
> To maintain whate'er their sect averred."

Could the dead speak, how many a bright knight errant might inform us of the satisfaction of a sound cudgelling! Could the dead speak, both Greek and Roman might tell us what gratification they experienced in dying for the establishment of a republic, or a tyranny! Could the dead speak, we might learn from the fallen citizens of Paris, whether it were more glorious to die for the abstract notion of a *Republic* or a *Monarchy;* and from our compatriots, whether were more dear, their liberty, their life, their all, or the sacrifice of them at the shrine of discontentment, libertinism, and anarchy!

"In the details of our constitution," say the reforming people, "there are many things to be considered—" "But who," saith the great *schoolmaster*, "except the intelligent, shall judge of the qualities required in a senator, or of the propriety

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of a law?" Oh! people! as the intelligence of the community expands, so may your franchises become gradually extended; although the time may come, when yourselves shall doubt of the *expediency*, and despair of the efficacy, of even such an extension. But, inasmuch as the uninformed, unpractised, and unthinking classes of society, are incapable of forming their own just opinions upon such matters, what would such an extension be worth in any case? What would it promote in many instances, but the mere chances of factious or stupid acclamation in favour of this or the other individual or project? Nothing would it serve towards securing a fairer or better representation in the senate of the land. Nay, as long as you are subject to be affected by the fluctuating circumstances of trade, the competition of nations and individuals, your own speculations, overtrading, improvidence, and vices, so long will your fortunes vacillate, and your disappointments and tribulations follow each other, as billow succeeds billow in the storm, to be at last dashed, with, perhaps, many a spicy burthen, upon the rugged rocks of your sea-girt isle. Nay, so long as ye do despite to the *faith which ye profess*, so long as ye make your folly, or even your wisdom, your God, so long shall ye find disappointment your lot, so long shall ye, like the Frogs in the fable, recoil from the very answer to your petitions, and become the prey, instead of the fondlings, of the very thing ye adored! "Where is the wise?

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Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

It is only to a virtuous or Christian people, that even the most enlightened form of government can much avail—it is only where the good of all is the object and desire of each—it is only where the virtue and integrity of an enlightened majority, seek to counterbalance a vicious and factious minority. Such an end, it is the distinguished excellence of the constitution and laws of this country to be calculated to secure. But what if the electors be biassed by impure, self-interested and party motives? What if the representatives, although they be not bound to confine their views exclusively to particular districts or interests, yet, in reality, too often appear to consider themselves the advocates of their particular constituents than the king's counsellors of the general public good, for which purpose they are, by their writs of summons, expressly called together? If they prefer the public weal to private opinions and interests, they are denounced as traitors to their constituents. If they hearken to the demands of individuals, and sacrifice the public to the individual or a party, the latter may laud them, but the state must condemn. The senate is thus agitated by conflicting interests and opinions—the common weal is lost sight of; and one patriotic motive or object no longer influences all. "So that it is a matter most essential to the liberties of this kingdom, that such members

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only be delegated to this important trust, as are most eminent for their independent probity, their fortitude, and their knowledge;" for it was a known apophthegm of the great Lord Treasurer Burleigh, "that England could never be ruined but by her *Parliament;*" and as Sir Matthew Hale observes, "this being the highest and greatest court, over which none other can have jurisdiction in the kingdom; if, by any means, a misgovernment should any way fall upon it, the subjects of this kingdom are left without all manner of remedy." To the same purpose, the president Montesquieu, though I trust too hastily, presages, that "as Rome, Sparta and Carthage have lost their liberty and perished, so the constitution of England will in time lose its liberty—will perish—it will perish whenever the *legislative power* shall become more corrupt than the *executive.*"

To adopt the words of the elegant Melmoth, "The moral qualifications which Cicero, in his book of laws, requires of the members of the Roman senate, might furnish a proper inscription over the entrance to every other public council of the same nature and importance—"Is ordo vitio careto—cæteris specimen esto."—And it is in his eulogy upon Cato the censor, that "he exerted the censorial powers with much advantage to the commonwealth; as he pointed the whole force of his authority against that luxury and licentiousness, which were beginning to make those first vigorous

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shoots, that in the subsequent ages universally overrun, and at length, by ruining the virtue, destroyed the liberty of the republic."

But, Oh! people of England, the fate of these realms depends ultimately upon your own intelligence and virtue. For seeing that the antagonist principles of your government cannot combine to your destruction, but through the corruption of your representatives, the men of your *own choice*, it is for you to evince your intelligence in the selection ye shall make. If you yield not supinely to usurpation or neglect, neither shall ye sacrifice private virtue to popular vices, nor your privileges upon the accursed altar of political corruption; nor relax the integrity of your characters, by yielding to the seductions of passion and faction, any more than to the languishments of reckless indifference. Every individual can effect far more for his own prosperity and happiness, and collectively for those of the state, than can possibly result from any senatorial enactment. What the Roman orator, above quoted, applies to his senate, let every Briton take humbly to himself, and then we may truly add, "Quod si est, tenemus omnia."

Let us look back at the absolutely ignorant part of mankind, apart from all that is intellectual—they see all things as they are; and so they are content that they must be—they crouch to arbitrary power —they endure to be trodden under foot, which they consider in the light of its being their hapless fate

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—the Egyptians, from the earliest times, have lived the slaves of despotism—they are content; and are they not happy?

Let us regard the purely intellectual portion of society, if such there be. They perceive that all things are imperfect—that mankind has not made the progress of which the race is susceptible—that some of their troubles may be alleviated, and that all things may be made better—they deliberate upon improvements, and upon the most reasonable way of effecting them. If the individual alone be concerned, he takes his own course—if the masses of the community be implicated, he endeavours to bring the minds of others to his own persuasion; until by the prevalence and influence of opinion, as of a mighty wind, he beholds the very thrones of tyrants tremble; and the aspect of society change as a vision before him; he beholds all things coming to pass in their proper time and order, as if he had had nothing to do in the matter.

If the individual be content to create his own happiness, to conform to existing laws, and not to perplex himself with matters which he, perhaps indolently, perhaps sagaciously, conceives cannot be essentially improved without some concomitant paramount evil, then it is possible and even common for intelligent persons to live contentedly and happily under the most arbitrary governments.

But now we must view the ignorant and intelligent as they really exist in civilized society. The former borrow a reflected lustre from the latter—

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they learn that their condition is improveable—they are told what their condition ought to be—they look to their rulers for those political changes which may be desired; but because they take not place at once, or cannot be effected at all, therefore passion dictates where reason holds no sway, and terror and violence are their brutal resort, only to crush them under the weight of woes which they shake down upon their own pates; and nothing is there heard but, Croak! Croak! Croak!—Agitate! Agitate! Agitate! The latter, the intelligent, are but like other mortals, and not like beings of a purely intellectual nature, as they often imagine. They are of like passions as other men—they are influenced by self-interest, by prejudices, and errors. Many of them, as we have seen, are little better than serious children; little better than the Frogs, with their Croak! Croak! Croak! Their views are short-sighted, often crude, and not seldom absurd. In the very means which they adopt to effect their most laudable objects, they have not unfrequently been as violent, as wrongheaded as, and more exquisitely depraved than, the most ignorant and brutal of the multitude. So that even some of them, and those, perhaps, the wisest of all, would exclaim, "Oh! that some kind friend had staid my guilty hand in the hour of my resentment or phrenzy! or plucked my winged words! For 'the evil which I would not, that I do.'"

Yet, oh! rulers and ministers of state, this intelligent portion of the people, have interests and

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judgment, and ye may not tamper improperly with them,—they well know the position in which ye stand—they feel the wants of increasing population and intelligence—they deliberate upon their own rights and wrongs; and they expect you to preserve to them the one, and save them from the other—that, in the language of their great charter, ye will "neither barter, deny, or defer right or justice"—in short, "England expects every man to do his duty;" ye also should perceive with whom ye have to contend,—an intelligent people; but subject to like passions as yourselves. Defer or deny right or justice; and then ye excite the very passions ye condemn—ye provoke the contempt of those who, like the subjects of King Log, will leap upon ye, and trample ye ingloriously beneath their feet, with their Croak! Croak! Croak!

Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.
Clari giganteo triumpho,
Cuncta supercilio moventis.

It has been seen that a breath can mar ye as a breath has made. The majesty of the crown, and the majesty of the people, alike look down upon ye. The honours that the one gives, the other,—oh! ye propounders of expediency, without practical utility,—insulted, takes away!

Indeed, it is fully manifest that each branch of the legislature, has good reason to acknowledge the *expediency* of a balance of moral power as well as of interest existing in the other—each is interested in

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maintaining the other, in order to secure its support—and the people themselves, if they reflect, are interested in the mutual check which the opinions and councils of the one branch impose upon the other; lest the unstable empire be thrown into perplexity or anarchy, by rash views and sweeping changes, by improper centralization of power, in any one body, or revolutions; by its rulers legislating all one way, by their leaning continually to the side of flattery, self-interest, terror, or power, and that the senate may be necessitated to deliberate on all important matters, before it can act.

By constantly following the popular outcry, there would be no more guarantee against partial and anomalous legislation, than under any despotism whatever. The *spirit of the age*, as it is called, has nothing to do with the principles of sound legislation. The principles of good legislation consist, in the framing of laws conformably to the well-being of the entire community. The spirit of the age is what? It has too often been the "madness of the people." It is a popular rage for something. As before remarked, it has been sometimes chivalrous, sometimes fanatical, sometimes loyal, as in the days of the anti-jacobins, and sometimes democratic and revolutionary, as in the commonwealth. It has undoubtedly oft exerted undue influence upon legislators. Yet the national weal must ever be the true aim of a wise and deliberative senate; and not the indulgence of individual or popular phrenzy. Indulge the popular

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spirit, and we shall be at one time plunged headlong into ruinous wars, at another into diabolical persecutions; at one time we shall become the victims of tyranny or faction, at another, the slaves of a vacillating multitude—we shall have revolutions instead of reforms; we shall abandon right principles and truth, and then the winds and the clouds shall become fit emblems of the popular spirit, and of all legislation. The spirit of the age cannot affect the principles of right government at any time; yet it must influence their application or perversion at all times; inasmuch as it is constituted of the predominant opinions and dispositions circulating in the masses of the empire. If it be good and Christian, it is well—if bad, and hostile to Christianity, its tendency is prejudicial. It ought not to be admitted as a ruling principle; and yet it is a powerfully governing influence. What is the spirit of the age in which we live? Is it, politically and truly, a desire for laws that will enact what are termed national and individual prosperity and real happiness,—or, is it not rather a mania for improvement, without knowing how to secure it? And there is surely in it something of the childish eagerness for some new toy, which the urchin breaks in pieces in the act of his very passion to possess it. There is no royal road to mathematics, or any of the sciences; and how can we expect at once, or even ever, to attain perfection in the least practical of all sciences? The philosopher's stone has not yet been discovered.

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The alchemists might purify their metal, but could not create it. Philosophers may tell us what is of all things most to be desired, but cannot realize it. In spite of all that is tried, and said, and written, we must still submit to be taught by *old experience* and necessity, in the practical details of human life. It is to laws of a higher order, derived from a higher and purer origin, by which men are to be brought to submit as rational beings, and to conduct themselves as Christians!

While we elevate the popular character, by enlarging its sphere of intelligence, and withal, diffusing the pure and enlightening spirit of Christian sentiments and affections; we establish a power at all times formidable to the despot and the usurper; and favourable to the prosperity and happiness of society. The vigilance of the public eye is stimulated, and its perceptions of justice and truth made clearer and stronger. It is then seen that public and private well-being and felicity are not less akin in their nature, than allied in their sources and their objects—that the *contingencies* of human life and circumstances, cannot be averted, but may be endured—that the same vices which affect the character and fortunes of individuals, also operate collectively upon nations and the common weal—that the principles of national prosperity, felicity, and renown, emanate not so much from the heads of rulers, as they rest, under the influence of religion, in the hearts of the people themselves; whilst private vices and popular corruption, at once con-

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sign the individual to ruin, and the empire to degeneracy. Such a catastrophe, be it our prayer, that "He who stilleth the raging of the sea, and the noise of his waves, and the madness of the people," may for ever avert!

"England! with all thy faults, I love thee still."

THE END.

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